

**POSITIVE PEER PRESSURE THAT ADOLESCENT BOYS EXPERIENCE AT A
SINGLE-GENDER HIGH SCHOOL IN GAUTENG**

by

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POSITIVE PEER PRESSURE THAT ADOLESCENT BOYS EXPERIENCE AT A SINGLE-GENDER HIGH SCHOOL IN GAUTENG

I declare that the above dissertation is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

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SUMMARY:

The purpose of the empirical study is to determine the nature of the peer pressure that boys experience at a single-gender school.

A literature study was conducted on single-gender education as opposed to co-education as well as the phenomenon of peer pressure during adolescence and the factors that might influence peer pressure.

An empirical investigation was conducted involving 221 adolescent boys. The results showed that boys in single-gender schools experience more positive than negative peer pressure. No significant differences were found between the peer pressure of boys at a single-gender school and those at a co-educational school. Motivation and relationship with peers were identified as the two most important variables relating to peer pressure.

Guidelines for parents, teachers, and adolescents were discussed to promote positive peer pressure and to minimise negative peer pressure. These guidelines included strategies to motivate adolescents and to promote positive peer relationships.

KEY TERMS:

Adolescents; Adolescence; Adolescent development; Peer groups; Peer pressure; Peer interaction; Peer relations; Peer acceptance; Behaviour; Self-concept; Parent-child relationships; Single-gender education; Co-educational schooling; Motivation; Stress; Academic performance; Extra-curricular participation; Relationship with peers

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DEDICATED TO THE SONS OF KING EDWARD VII SCHOOL

*'Sons of this place, let this of you be said:
That you who live are worthy of your dead'*

*If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting too;
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or being hated, don't give way to hating,
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise:*

*If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with Kings—nor lose the common touch,
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,
If all men count with you, but none too much;
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And—which is more—you'll be a Man, my son!*

∞ Rudyard Kipling ∞

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

A.D.: Anno domini

AISD: Austin Independent School District

NYFERA : New York Foundation For Educational Reform & Accountability

PPI: Peer Pressure Inventory

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

1.1 AWARENESS OF THE PROBLEM

Adolescence is the period of psychological and physiological transition between childhood and adulthood. The beginning of adolescence, around the onset of puberty, is characterised by dramatic changes in hormone levels, which results in significant changes to the adolescent's physical appearance. This developmental period is also characterised by the continued development of social abilities and behaviour.

1.1.1 Adolescence

Adolescence can be a time of turmoil and turbulence, of stress, and emotional insecurity. Rebellion against authority and convention is to be expected and tolerated for the sake of learning and growth (Ginott, 2003:24). According to Blakemore (2008:268), this is due to the many changes experienced concurrently, including physical maturation, drive for independence, increased importance of social and peer interactions, and brain development (Casey, *et al.*, 2010:225). Hence, some adolescents may have a difficult time coping with the changes that occur. During this period of maturation, adolescents may experience intense feelings of despair, anxiety, hopelessness, anger, impatience and oppression (Bezuidenhout & Dietrich, 2004:69).

The onset of adolescence marks a change in patterns of social behaviour. One of the most obvious changes in adolescence is that the social core around which the adolescent's world revolves, shifts from the family to the peer group. In order to establish greater independence from their parents, adolescents must orient themselves towards their peers more than they did in the earlier stages of their development (Burnett & Blakemore, 2009:52).

Adolescents spend an increasing amount of time each day in the company of their peers. Omoegun (1995, as cited in Oni, 2010:12) suggested that adolescents have a tendency to want to associate with members of their own age group (peers). As a

result, the decisions of the peers also influence the decisions of individuals within the group.

Peer groups serve a number of important functions throughout adolescence, providing a temporary reference point for a developing sense of identity. Peer groups provide adolescents with a source of information about the world outside of the family and about themselves (Gentry & Campbell, 2002:21).

It is through the identification with peers that adolescents start to define how they differ from their parents and begin to develop their own sense of moral judgement and values (Kingery, Erdley & Marshall, 2011:219).

Peer groups serve as powerful reinforcers during adolescence as they become the source of popularity, status, prestige, and acceptance. Peer acceptance, in turn, plays an important role in adjustment from adolescence and into adulthood. The pursuit of peer acceptance is manifested in the way they dress, speak, walk, and in their general interests, all of which can be viewed as an attempt to “fit in” with the group. Consequently, peers often receive the blame for the onset of risky behaviours ranging from substance abuse to teen pregnancies (Bourne, 2001:4).

Peer group involvement tends to be at its highest during adolescence. Conformity and concerns relating to acceptance are at their peak when compared to other stages of development (Santrock, 2001:57). Since peer acceptance is very important to many adolescents, it enables them to join a particular peer group and identify with the behaviours and attitudes of that group. Consequently, adolescents are often willing to conform to pressure from their peers in order to be accepted.

1.1.2 Peer pressure

Peer pressure involves changing one’s behaviour to meet the perceived expectations of others and can further be defined as social pressure forces a person to choose certain actions, adopt certain values, or otherwise conform in order to be accepted (Castrogiovanni, 2002:4).

We can link several interrelated factors to peer pressure during the adolescent years. Fourie (2001:213) measured several factors such as age, gender, academic

performance, the number of children in the family, extra-mural participation, self-concept, and parent-child relationships. The findings were that self-concept is the most important, correlating negatively with peer pressure. Adolescents with a high self-concept do not rely on the approval or acceptance of their peers and therefore experience less peer pressure.

With regard to age, a number of studies have found that peer pressure increases slowly from early adolescence and reaches its peak in Grade 9, after which it slowly starts to decrease. Adolescents in Grade 8 generally experience more peer pressure than adolescents in Grades 10 to Grade 12 (Berndt, 1982:1448; Seifert & Hoffnung, 1987:468; Wall *et al.*, 1993:412; Schuld, 1999:140; Fourie, 2001:187-186; Bester & Fourie, 2006:167; Steinberg & Monahan, 2007:1541).

There is a direct link between an adolescent's quality of interaction with their parents and the quality of their peer group relationships. Conger and Galambos (1997:123) and Fuligni and Eccles (1993:628) found that adolescents who have a good relationship with their parents are less likely to conform to peer pressure. This was confirmed by Fourie (2001:212), who found that high peer pressure could be associated with poor parent-child relationships.

More peer pressure is experienced by adolescents whose parents demonstrate a high level of parental control over issues such as choice of friends, dating partners, problematic behaviour, or drug use. In families where the parenting styles are either indulgent or disciplinarian, adolescents experienced high peer pressure. However, adolescents experience less peer pressure in situations in which the parents have an authoritative parenting style where parents and adolescents negotiated family decisions. These findings suggest that we can use earlier parent-child relationships to help predict adolescents' experience of peer pressure in late adolescence (Geary, 2011:36).

Ide *et al.* (1981:483) found that the peer group could influence adolescents' academic performance in either a positive or negative manner. Fourie (2001:188) established that the higher the peer pressure, the lower the academic performance and that adolescents who are academically stronger have more successful peer

relationships and are more readily accepted by the peer group. Consequently, they experience less peer pressure to gain acceptance.

The majority of research examining peer influence is focused on anti-social, deviant, and health-risk behaviours. Research in these behavioural domains has continued over the last decade and highlights the role of peers in alcohol use, smoking, and aggressive and/or illegal behaviours (Brechwald & Prinstein, 2011:166). Negative peer pressure strongly influences adolescents and encourages negative behaviour such as using illicit drugs, drinking, and cheating on a test. Adolescents often resort to delinquent behaviour in order to receive approval from their peer groups and fulfil their need to be accepted (Cullingford & Morrison, 1997:73; Vargas, 2011:311).

Despite negative peer pressure, the possibility of positive peer pressure also exists. Peer relationships or friendships can improve school performance in several ways.

Peer pressure may have a positive influence on academic performance, extra-curricular participation and general behaviour (Schuld, 1999:1). Brown *et al.* (1986:529) tells us that peer group influence tends to encourage adolescents to perform better academically rather than promote bad academic performance. Adolescents with close friends, who perform well academically, are more inclined to improve their academic performance, Brechwald and Prinstein (2011:174) found that peers influenced adolescents' academic achievement and intrinsic motivation in a school context. Consequently, the presence of positive peer relationships can enhance the overall atmosphere of the classroom and encourage higher levels of both class participation and academic achievement (Spavin, 2007:28).

Adolescents who experience higher levels of validation from their peers, also receive more positive feedback on class participation and school success. Having friendships within a peer group that provides help, guidance, and communication, support adolescents in their efforts to excel at homework and class work. Higher levels of trust in friendships could lead adolescents to attend school more regularly, while lower levels of conflict and alienation in the peer group would serve as less of a distraction in terms of academic participation (Wentzel & Caldwell, 1997, as cited in Spavin, 2007:6).

Adolescents may experience peer pressure as a positive force that encourages them to participate in extra-curricular activities. Vest and Simpkins (2012, as cited in Brown, 2013:80) suggested that gaining popularity or visibility within the peer group could be the motivating factor that emboldens adolescents to pursue certain extra-curricular activities. Bohnert *et al.* (2010:576) reported that continuous involvement in extra-curricular activities, especially sports, increases the number of nominations an adolescent would receive as a close friend to other members of the peer group.

Adolescents tend to attribute a set of behaviours or traits to peers who take part in specific extra-curricular activities, for example, chess players could be labelled nerdy, while rugby players could be labelled popular or unintelligent. Subsequently, peer status becomes an important factor in an adolescent's choice of extra-curricular activities. It seems that adolescents choose to participate in a specific extra-curricular activity based on the peer status attached to the activity (Brown, 2013:80-81).

Adolescents can also experience peer pressure as a positive force in their general behaviour. Ellis and Zarbatany (2007, as cited in Brechwald & Prinstein, 2011:173) found that peer groups with greater centrality are more potent sources of influence in terms of pro-social behaviour. Pro-social behaviours are often referred to as compassionate, empathetic, or ethical behaviour. According to the literature, it seems that peer socialisation processes provide potential protection from maladaptive outcomes and are more likely to promote pro-social behaviour as opposed to deviant behaviour (Adamczyk-Robinette *et al.*, 2002, as cited in Brechwald & Prinstein, 2011:167). A study conducted by Choukas-Bradley *et al.* (2015:2209) indicated that high status peers (adolescents who represent idealised identities) might be especially influential on other adolescents' pro-social behaviours. The research indicated that participants conformed more strongly to the pro-social norms when they believed they were interacting with high status peers.

Previous studies, in which gender and group pressure were examined, indicated that boys and girls experience peer pressure differently. Boys experience both negative and positive peer pressure more strongly, especially in terms of deviant behaviour, and involvement with family and school respectively (Berndt, 1982;

Brown *et al.*, 1986; Taylor & Wong, 1996; Steinberg & Monahan, 2007).

1.1.3 Rationale of the study

Since the different genders experience peer pressure differently, we can assume that there is the possibility that group dynamics may differ when only boys are present, such as at a single-gender boys' school, compared to mixed-gender groups.

Single-gender education may also cause a difference in peer pressure, both positive and negative. Such an assertion, however, is speculative as no research could be found on how single-gender education influences peer pressure or to determine whether peer pressure would increase or decrease in the absence of the opposite gender.

There is a vague indication that differences in group pressure may be expected when taking into consideration the advantages of single-gender education for boys. According to the Austin Independent School District (AISD, 2011:10), single-gender schools are beneficial to boys. Such a setting can potentially boost their confidence in their ability to learn because they are not being compared to girls, who are generally seen to be academically stronger than boys. Boys are also able to develop strong bonds of friendship and camaraderie with peers and teachers so that the impact of positive role models can exert its maximum potential effect on general behaviour. Kirner (2013:2) found single-gender education to be beneficial because adolescents who are grouped by gender, perform better academically, and have better peer interactions without the distraction and social pressures of the opposite gender. Goff and Johnson (2008:21) used brain-based research to support the concept of single-gender schools and found that boys' brains function best in situations that encourage competition; therefore, single-gender schools should be beneficial to boys as their competitive nature would encourage them to participate in extra-curricular activities and perform well academically.

Most of the research found in the literature focuses on negative peer pressure in a co-educational setting (Brown, 1990; Harter, 1998; Rubin *et al.*, 1998 and Mayeux *et al.*, 2008, as cited in Brechwald & Prinstein, 2011).

Some of these studies only include boys but does not state whether the boys attended a co-educational or single-gender school. A multi-faceted approach to peer pressure, both positive and negative, and in single-gender and co-educational schools should, therefore, be considered.

1.2 FORMAL STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Information obtained from various research studies has shown that, over the last 50 years, the relationship that an adolescent has with peers, has replaced their relationships with adults in terms of providing foundational values and behavioural influence. Recent research indicates that friends play a key role in both negative and positive behaviour (Oni, 2010:14). While typical behaviour related to negative peer pressure includes alcohol use, drug use, crime, delinquent behaviour and poor academic performance (Oni, 2010:15; Brechwald & Prinstein, 2011:166), only a limited amount of research related to positive peer pressure has been done focusing on pro-social behaviour, academic performance, family relationships and extra-curricular participation (Snell & Hirschstein, 2005:378-379; Lingard *et al.*, 2009:150; Brechwald & Prinstein, 2011:166).

No research has been done on negative and positive peer pressure in single-gender schools as compared to co-educational schools. This gap in the literature gives rise to the question of how peer pressure is experienced in a single-gender school. This was the general aim of the investigation. The peer pressure experienced at a co-educational school needs to be taken into account for comparison purposes.

The general aim as mentioned above gave rise to the formal problem statements of this investigation:

Problem statement 1: Which variables relate to positive and negative peer pressure experienced by adolescents?

Problem statement 2: Is the peer pressure experienced by adolescent boys in a single-gender school more positive than negative in nature?

Problem statement 3: Do adolescent boys in a single-gender school differ from boys in a co-educational school with regard to negative and positive peer pressure?

Problem statement 4: Are there specific factors that discriminate best between those boys who experience positive peer pressure and those who experience negative peer pressure?

1.3 AIM OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of the study is to determine the nature of the peer pressure that boys experience at a single-gender school compared to the peer pressure experienced by boys at a co-educational school, to identify the variables that relate to negative and positive peer pressure and, lastly, to determine whether boys experience more negative or positive peer pressure in the absence of girls.

A **literature study** will be conducted with the aim of:

- conceptualising single-gender education in order to differentiate between single-gender and co-educational schooling;
- determining the considerations that cause the need for single-gender schools;
- exploring single-gender education, its advantages and disadvantages, respective examples of which include improved academic achievement and better sensitivity to and awareness of gender differences in learning, and propagating and reinforcing gender stereotypes;
- analysing the phenomenon of peer pressure and how adolescents experience pressure related to peer group involvement, school involvement, family involvement and conformity to peer group norms; and
- conceptualising factors that influence negative and positive peer pressure such as self-concept, age, gender, socio-economic status, and parent-child relationships.

An **empirical investigation** will be conducted with the aim to:

- explore the factors that relate to positive and negative pressure, such as self-concept, age, gender and relationship with peers;
- determine whether boys in single-gender education differ from boys in co-educational schools with regard to positive and negative peer pressure;

- determine whether boys in single-gender schools experience more positive or more negative peer pressure than boys in co-educational schools; and
- determine the factor(s) that discriminate best between those boys who experience positive peer pressure and those who experience negative peer pressure.

1.4 PROGRAMME OF THE INVESTIGATION

Chapter 2 will provide a literature study pertaining to single-gender education in which the history of single-gender education will be explored and the reasons for their establishment and present-day existence will be investigated. The main aims of single-gender schools will be discussed, specifically outlining that single-gender schools were initially opened during the twelfth century to educate boys from aristocratic backgrounds. The different approaches to single-gender education will then be discussed, which include feminism, the gender gap, and boys' underachievement. Based on the available literature the various advantages and disadvantages of single-gender education will be discussed.

Chapter 3 will explore literature relating to peer pressure during adolescence. Firstly, adolescent development will be discussed, focusing on the various changes that adolescents undergo during this developmental stage. Secondly, the relationship between adolescent development and peer pressure will be examined. This will be followed by defining and identifying peer pressure, including what a peer group is, what peer groups offer adolescents, and the nature of adolescent peer relations. Next, the factors relating to negative peer pressure (such as smoking, alcohol use, drugs and delinquency) and positive peer pressure (such as academic performance, extra-curricular participation and pro-social behaviour) will be discussed. Lastly, factors that influence peer pressure such as gender, age, self-concept, and parent-child relationships will be considered.

Chapter 4 will contain the research design of the empirical investigation and hypotheses that relate to the research problem will be formulated, based on the findings from the literature study. This chapter will discuss the manner in which the sample was selected while the development of a questionnaire to measure peer

pressure will be explored. Lastly, the research procedure that was followed during the empirical investigation will be presented.

Chapter 5 will provide an analysis of the results of the empirical investigation. This includes the way in which the hypotheses were statistically tested and conclusions drawn after the testing of each hypothesis.

Chapter 6 will deal with the educational implications of the research findings. The implications will focus on guidelines for teachers and parents, after which the contribution and limitations of the study will be discussed and suggestions for further research will be provided.

CHAPTER TWO

SINGLE-GENDER EDUCATION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the aim of the current study is to determine how boys at single-gender schools experience peer pressure. It is, therefore, imperative that a thorough analysis of single-gender education is done. Definitions from the available literature (Rundell, 2002; Riordan, 2008:3; AISD, 2001:7; Kirner, 2013:1), will be presented in order to differentiate between single-gender and co-educational schooling.

The history and rationale of single-gender education will be explored and their present-day existence will be investigated. The main aims of single-gender schools will be discussed, specifically outlining that single-gender schools were initially established during the twelfth century to educate boys from aristocratic backgrounds in order to educate and discipline the 'elite male mind' (Ivinson & Murphy, 2007:17). Single-gender schools for girls were only instituted in the first half of the nineteenth century. The curriculum in these girls' schools was mainly concerned with refining the girls to make them more marriageable (Unterhalter, 2006:191). Although this is not true in today's society, single-gender schools still exist and, therefore, the current vision and mission of single-gender schools should be investigated.

The different approaches to single-gender education will then be discussed (Lee & Marks, 1994:98; Thompson & Ungerleider, 2004). The feminist view on single-gender education explores the concerns for girls and how they are disadvantaged by the co-educational school setting. Feminists believe that girls do not have equal access to education. Feminists believe that the co-educational school environment is masculinised. Achievement of boys and girls in certain subjects can create a gender gap in co-educational schools (Thompson & Ungerleider, 2004). There is a concern about boys' performance in subjects that are typically seen as 'female-orientated' subjects, such as consumer studies, drama, art, music, and languages. There is also a concern about how girls perform in subjects that are considered to

be 'male-orientated' subjects, such as science, mathematics, and information technology. According to the proponents of single-gender education, the single-gender school setting addresses the achievement gap in these subjects, as they are no longer seen to be subjects that belong to the opposite gender.

With a topic such as single-gender education, there will always be proponents who will emphasise the advantages of single-gender education and opponents who will criticise it. In the literature, it is evident that there are several advantages to single-gender education with proponents believing that single-gender education can address issues relating to gender inequality and academic performance. The literature study of Lee and Marks (1990), Riordan (1998) and Gurian *et al.* (2009, as cited in Dickey, 2014:18), has certainly pointed to a number of possible advantages, which include improved academic achievement, greater awareness of and sensitivity to gender differences in learning, improved fairness in curriculum as well as more access to opportunities for learners to pursue academic, extra-curricular, and vocation-orientated activities.

These aspects will be discussed in more detail while the opposing research will also be analysed. On one hand, the critics of single-gender education argue that these schools are unconstitutional institutions that propagate and reinforce gender stereotypes (Berger, 2012:35). It is also believed that learners who have to re-enter a co-educational environment from a single-gender environment are more likely to struggle to adapt and interact with a mixed-gender group, which is a truer reflection of society. Opponents to single-gender education also maintain that segregating learners based on gender, will have the same harmful effects as racial segregation and believe it to be inconsistent with the societal and educational goals of diversity (Riordan, 2008).

On the other hand, proponents of single-gender education argue that single-gender schools improve learners' academic achievement as it focuses on gender-specific learning styles (Lee, 1997, cited in Datnow & Hubbard, 2002; Riordan, 1998; Sax, 2005, 2007, as cited in AISD, 2001:12). It is, therefore, important to determine what literature and previous research indicates in terms of the academic achievement of learners in single-gender schools. Smithers and Robinson (2006:8), Spielhagen (2011:5-6) and Friend (2007:58) studied the academic achievement of learners in

co-educational schools and learners in single-gender schools in countries such as Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America. These research findings will be discussed in more detail in section 2.7.

Since it is also of importance to ascertain which aspects of single-gender education earlier researchers have focused on, the available literature makes it evident that there are four general, and often intersecting, aspects which researchers use to compare single-gender education and co-educational schooling (NYFERA, 2006:2; Howe, 2010). These four fields are achievement, school subjects, attitude, and gender stereotyping. Each will be discussed in depth in this chapter.

Based on the available literature there are various advantages and disadvantages of single-gender education and co-educational schooling and, therefore, it is important to determine why parents choose specific schools. Although Miriam David (1997, as cited in Jackson & Bisset, 2005:195) states that very little of the research based on the parental choice of school has been concerned with gender, parents tend to take into account various factors when choosing a school. These factors include:

- good time management;
- monitoring the progress of learners;
- good parent-child relationships;
- creating learning environments that are safe and positive;
- a clear mission and focus on academics; and
- high expectations from learners to perform well in academic, sport, or cultural activities.

These aspects will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

2.2 DEFINING SINGLE-GENDER AND CO-EDUCATIONAL SCHOOLING

For the purpose of the current research, single-gender education and co-educational schooling will be defined in order to establish the differences between the two types of educational settings. Firstly, the term 'single-gender education' refers to primary and secondary educational settings where male and female

learners attend classes or school exclusively with learners of their own gender (Riordan, 2008:3; AISD, 2011:7; Kirner, 2013:1).

Conversely, co-education, also known as "mixed-sex education" or "mixed-gender education", is the educational integration of male and female learners in the same environment and classes (AISD, 2001:7). According to the Oxford advanced learners' dictionary of current English (Rundell, 2002), co-educational schooling refers to having male and female learners taught together in the same classes or school rather than being segregated by gender.

It is evident from the above-mentioned definitions that single-gender schooling refers to an educational setting where boys and girls are segregated based on gender. Co-educational schools, on the other hand, are educational settings where boys and girls attend the same school and classes and there is no segregation based on gender.

2.3 HISTORY OF SINGLE-GENDER EDUCATION

For centuries, the Church controlled education and the first schools were attached to monasteries and cathedrals. Christian theologians followed Greek educational system during the 5th century A.D., which believed that learners had to learn to think before they could apply knowledge (Ivinson & Murphy, 2007:16). Therefore, the purpose of education during that period was not intended to address social and economic needs but rather to improve the mind.

A need for single-gender education arose during the 12th century A.D. as a result of the Hellenic view that education was intended for the aristocracy and professional men who needed to 'be free to think'. Subsequently, this need was met by establishing public schools and the first universities (Ivinson & Murphy, 2007:16). The 14th century A.D. saw the introduction of the first grammar schools for boys whose curriculum was based on the trivium, namely the study of grammar, rhetoric, and logic. At this time there was still no institutional education provided for girls as the purpose of education was to educate and discipline the 'elite male mind' (Ivinson & Murphy, 2007:17).

The introduction of education for the masses in Britain during the 19th century A.D. included many single-gender schools. Even though the United Kingdom started establishing co-education for primary schooling (for 5 to 10-year-olds) in the 1920s, single-gender schools were still found in some parts of the country, including London, until as late as the 1960s (Unterhalter, 2006:190).

In the first half of the nineteenth century, it was mostly boys who were sent to school among the middle and upper classes. Girls usually received a more limited education at home, alongside younger brothers and sisters through governesses. Many boys attended local, day grammar schools. A fair number of these had begun as foundations for both genders but progressed to accommodating only boys. Others attended private boarding schools, the elite of which later formed the public schools that fostered appropriate sorts of hegemonic, classed, and Christian masculinity. Girls' were instructed mainly in 'accomplishments', which were aimed at making them more marriageable. During this period the same schooling system was applied in South Africa and other British colonies (Unterhalter, 2006:191), although by 1919, less than a quarter of secondary schools in South Africa provided single-gender education (Ivinson & Murphy, 2007:23). In the 1850s, middle-class women began to contest the social construction that restricted their roles (Manthorpe, 1985). They demanded an education system that would equip them with the necessary skills to support themselves should the need arise, or should they choose to do so. However, in their struggle for access to the elite curriculum, single-gender education for women was proposed because it mirrored that of boys' schools. Women's access to education threatened the social order and the heterosexual regime that underpinned it (Watson, 1997, as cited in Ivinson & Murphy, 2007:21). It was feared that women were not just attempting to democratise contemporary relations between husbands and wives, male, and female partners, but, more importantly, that they were attempting to undermine the way in which future generations would view patriarchal relations in social and educational spheres (Arnot & Weiler, 2005:200). Dale's research in 1969, 1971, and 1974 (Ivinson & Murphy, 2007:24) is generally heralded as a key influence on the move away from single-gender schooling. The research argued that the natural state for secondary education was co-educational schooling and challenged previous

essentialist views about gender. A drastic decline in single-gender schools were caused by the introduction of comprehensive schools in 1965.

During the 1970s, in the United States of America, girls failed to gain access to mathematics and sciences in the same way boys did because of the polarisation in subject choices in co-educational schools. This caused major concern over the effectiveness of co-education in terms of equal educational opportunities for girls and renewed an interest in the likelihood that single-gender education could offer equality in an unequal world (Ivinson & Murphy, 2007:25).

Although there was a drastic increase in single-gender public education in the United States in the twentieth century (United States Department of Education, 2008), the United States of America has had a long-standing tradition of co-educational public schools (Bigler & Signorella, 2011:17). Conversely, single-gender education was more common and popular in countries such as Australia, New Zealand, Belgium, South Africa, and the United Kingdom. South Africa, as with most of Britain's colonies, developed its schools according to the British education model in the mid to late nineteenth century (Morrell, 2000:221). The United States of America was influenced by certain factors to continue with their tradition of co-education and, as a result, the only single-gender education on offer was private schooling (Bigler & Signorella, 2011:18).

Title IX of the Education Act Amendments of 1972 placed several limitations and restrictions on education because of the statement:

“No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education programme or activity receiving federal financial assistance.” (U.S. Department of Education, 2008).

In 2008, revisions were made to Title IX in connection with the No Child Left Behind Act (United States Department of Education, 2008), which endorsed government funding for pioneering educational programmes including single-gender education (single-gender schools and single-gender classes offered within co-educational schools).

2.4 APPROACHES TO SINGLE-GENDER EDUCATION

According to Lee and Marks (1994:98) and Thompson and Ungerleider (2004), the interest in single-gender education appears to have developed within the contexts of three general domains, namely feminism, and girls' disadvantage in schools, achievement and the gender gap, and boys' academic underachievement.

2.4.1 Feminism and girls' disadvantage in schools

Lee and Marks (1994:98) stated that the concerns of feminists about equality and access to education for girls have drawn attention to the disadvantages that girls experience in schools. Consequently, researchers began to explore ways of removing such alleged barriers to academic success and improving the effects of a masculine educational environment on girls' academic success. As a result, single-gender girls' schools were considered.

Most of the research in this area seeks to examine the effects of single-gender education specifically on girls' sense of well-being and their attitudes towards school in general. Researchers attempted to assess the benefit of single-gender schooling for girls, focusing on psychological constraints such as self-esteem, confidence, comfort, and self-efficacy (Thompson & Ungerleider, 2004).

2.4.2 Achievement and the gender gap

Thompson and Ungerleider (2004) stated that educators, policy-makers, and researchers were led to explore the possible benefits of single-gender education as awareness and acknowledgement of sexism and gender inequalities in the classroom context became more prevalent and as female retention and achievement improved. Researchers focused mainly on single-gender education as a means of improving girls' achievement in subjects, such as science, mathematics, and information technology that typically seen as male-orientated subjects. Thompson and Ungerleider (2004) found that a substantial portion of the research conducted in this field, focused specifically on increasing girls' academic achievement in these subject areas. They also identified concerns relating to boys' academic achievement in subjects that are typically seen as female-orientated subjects, but the concerns were to a much lesser extent.

The idea of using single-gender schooling to increase the academic achievement of boys and girls in subjects that are considered to belong to the 'other' gender, has received a great deal of support from governments, especially in countries such as England and Wales. These countries started publishing school exam results that indicated consistent and superior achievements by learners graduating from single-gender schools (Thompson & Ungerleider, 2004). Some countries view single-gender schooling as a way of balancing extreme imbalances in enrolments in subject areas regarded as belonging to the "other" gender within the co-educational schooling system.

2.4.3 Gender disadvantage revisited: Boys' underachievement

Concern about boys' underachievement became prevalent during the late 1990s in countries such as the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, and the United States of America. This was prompted by the publication of exam results that indicated that the average scores for girls were often much higher than those of boys. Unfortunately, a change in the focus of concern from girls to boys is more apparent in the media than within academic literature (Thompson & Ungerleider, 2004).

The idea of boys' underachievement has been challenged by many with researchers such as Thompson and Ungerleider (2004) and Martino and Meyenn (2002:304) who discuss what Martino and Meyenn have termed "the moral panic" about boys' underachievement.

The debate pertaining to boys as the 'new disadvantaged' is seen as a backlash against feminism and the perception of boys failing at school. Gorard (1999:236) argued that boys fail to match girls' academic achievements regardless of how they are taught since most boys lack independence and are less developed linguistically during their early years of schooling. Gorard (1999:236) added that these barriers to learning in the early years of schooling often accompany them throughout their educational life cycle.

Very little research has been done on single-gender schooling that focuses primarily on the underachievement of boys, which is surprising since the issue is so prominent presented in the international media.

2.5 ADVANTAGES OF SINGLE-GENDER EDUCATION

Gurian *et al.* (2009, as cited in Dickey, 2014:18) stated that single-gender schools are successful in educating both girls and boys and encourages gender equality. Single-gender education is seen as an alternative method to co-educational schooling in terms of improving academic performance. Educators can implement gender-specific strategies to address the unique challenges that male and female learners face in attempting to make their educational and social experiences in school more successful.

2.5.1 General advantages of single-gender education

Supporters of single-gender education have pointed to potential advantages for both boys and girls (Lee, 1997; Riordan, 1998) that include:

- Improved academic achievement;
- Sensitivity to, and awareness of gender differences in learning;
- Teaching that incorporates research on differences in brain development between the genders;
- Increased fairness in curriculum and access to learner opportunities;
- Reduced strength of youth-culture values;
- Provision of same-gender role models;
- Improved peer interactions;
- More leadership opportunities;
- Increased opportunities for learners to pursue academic, extra-curricular, and career-orientated activities without the pressure of gender stereotypes; and
- More same-gender bonding and community.

Some proponents of single-gender education believe that there are significant and biologically-based differences in the way girls and boys learn, and that educational instruction is more effective when it is specifically designed with these differences in mind, such as seen with single-gender education (Gurian *et al.*, 2001, as cited in AISD, 2001:10). These proponents argue that single-gender education is more effective than co-education since the instruction takes gender-specific learning styles and trends into account. For example, gender differences in hearing can be

accommodated when teachers speak more loudly in all-male classrooms than in all-female ones (Sax, 2007, as cited in AISD, 2001:7). In addition to the general advantages that learners and teachers experience, single-gender education proponents point to specific benefits for the different role players, such as both boys and girls, the teachers, and other staff members who teach and interact with them (Kirner, 2013:10-11).

Additionally, Protheroe (2009:32) argued another positive finding in that separate schools could address and correct disparities between male and female learners. Schools segregated by gender would benefit male learners with lower levels of academic achievement and would help reduce the achievement gap. Furthermore, a targeted curriculum could increase both nationwide assessment scores and pass rates.

Brain-based research done by Goff and Johnson (2008:21) was used to support the concept of single-gender effective education strategies. Their report describes schools that are normally organised for educational experiences such as reading, listening, talking, and responding. It goes on to suggest that such environments are best suited to female learners, while boys' brains function best in situations that encourage competition. They assumed that the poor behaviour from male learners could be associated with a lack of engagement in the classroom, which may also contribute to higher rates of suspensions and low attendance rates in special-needs education classes for male learners.

Leonard Sax (2009, as cited in AISD, 2001:9) like Goff and Johnson (2008), is an avid proponent of creating separate learning institutions based on innate biological differences between male and female learners (Sax, 2007, 2009, as cited in AISD, 2001:9). He has written various books on the successes of single-gender schools for both boys and girls and has conducted research to prove his theories. Sax (2007, 2009, as cited in AISD, 2001:10) reasons that boys and girls must learn in environments that cater to their different learning styles. Similarly, Berger (2012:35) stated that if one teaches the same subjects to girls and boys in the same way, it will result in girls who believe mathematics to be difficult and boys who believe that art and poetry are 'just for girls'.

2.5.2 Advantages for girls

Some educators believe that female-only classrooms are more supportive of girls' academic achievement, particularly in subjects such as mathematics, science, and technology, than classrooms that include boys (Shapka & Keating, 2003:943). Proponents of single-gender education also noted that girls tend to become more competitive, less shy, and take risks in a single-gender setting.

Outside the classroom, girls embrace sports like hockey and soccer more enthusiastically and with less worry of the possibility of being labelled as tomboys (AISD, 2001:9). Other advocates note advantages that include a decrease of gender bias in teacher-learner interactions, less sexual harassment from boys, increased enrolment of girls in subjects they often avoid in co-educational settings, and improved self-concept (Riordan, 2008:45).

2.5.3 Advantages for boys

Research conducted by the International Boys School Coalition (AISD, 2001:9-10), found that boys-only schools can provide a stimulating learning environment where boys are encouraged to fully participation in all activities. Such single-gender schools for boys promote self-expression, a respect for the various paths to manhood and provide an atmosphere in which boys can discover sensitive gender and sex-related issues (AISD, 2001:10). Educational programmes designed to meet the developmental needs of boys offer many advantages, including:

- An increase in confidence in their ability to learn when they are not being compared to girls;
- The incorporation of books and other materials related to the curriculum that interest boys into all aspects of the school's programme;
- Opportunities to be taught and coached by those who want to work with boys;
- Opportunities to grow at their own pace and can behave as boys for as long as they need, protected from society's pressure to get involved with girls before they are ready; and
- The development of strong bonds of friendship and camaraderie with peers and teachers so that the impact of positive male role models can have its fullest effect.

2.6 DISADVANTAGES OF SINGLE-GENDER EDUCATION

Some researchers, such as Berger (2012) who addressed the issue of negative stereotyping of learners in single-gender settings, argued that single-gender schools are unconstitutional institutions that propagate and reinforce gender stereotypes. The study further referred to a recent court case in which women were not permitted to join a military institution. The United States Supreme Court ruled that the organisation's gender-acceptance criteria was unethical and violated Title IX. The study concluded that single-gender schools unlawfully remove resources from all learners in need (Berger, 2012:35).

Opponents to single-gender education, such as the authors of *The PseudoScience of Single-gender Schooling* (2009) reasoned that single-gender education reinforces negative stereotypes and that there is very little evidence of increased academic achievement for boys or girls (Halpern *et al.*, 2011:1706). These proponents argue against using brain-based research to justify the segregation of learners based on gender. They state that, while certain gender differences (e.g. in brain activation patterns, auditory thresholds, memory performance) have been reported in adults, none of these differences are substantial enough to justify different educational methods. They also maintain that learners from a single-gender environment who re-enter a co-educational environment, are more likely to struggle to adapt and interact with the mixed-gender group.

Proponents of co-educational schooling do not approve of single-gender education. They state that, when advocates of single-gender schooling claim that there is scientific proof that girls' and boys' brains operate differently, that is really just a form of disguised stereotyping of men and women. (These scientific claims being that girls are more co-operative and boys are more competitive.) (ACLU, 2009: 4).

Some critics claim that single-gender schools do not prepare children for the real co-educational world of work and family in the way that co-educational schools do (Sax, 2005, as cited in AISD, 2011:14). Learners, especially girls, need the opportunity to express themselves in front of a mixed-gender classroom during their school years to develop a positive self-concept that will enable them to compete in

a mixed-gender environment later in their lives (Sax, 2005, as cited in AISD, 2011:17).

Opponents of single-gender education also argue against single-gender education by maintaining that it:

- has the same harmful effects as racial segregation;
- is inconsistent with societal and educational diversity; and
- does not prepare learners to interact meaningfully in a mixed-gender society or with members of the opposite gender (Riordan, 2008:13).

2.7 NEUTRAL FINDINGS RELATED TO SINGLE-GENDER EDUCATION

Smithers and Robinson (2006:8) studied and based their data on the academic achievement of learners in co-educational and single-gender learning environments in Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America. They determined that there were no reliable findings that suggested single-gender education was either more or less beneficial for learners than co-education. In addition, they noted that both types of schools produced learners who were academically successful. Subsequently, they stated that it was impossible to predict learner achievement based solely on gender-segregated or mixed-gender settings.

Spielhagen (2007:59-62) conducted an evaluation of single-gender classrooms in a public middle school that offered gender-segregated classes in the sixth, seventh and eighth grades. At the beginning of the school year, administrators selected teachers who would educate learners in the new single-gender environment while others would continue teaching co-educational classes. This caused conflict among teachers since the administrators forced teachers into single-gender classrooms regardless of whether they supported the concept or not. Findings suggested that single-gender education was partially effective in improving learner achievement. Furthermore, Spielhagen (2007:64) found that younger learners were more likely to prefer single-gender education. She also reviewed teachers' perspectives on the single-gender classroom initiatives and found mixed responses. While some teachers expressed support for single-gender classes, others did not agree with segregating learners by gender and requested that the practice be abandoned. Spielhagen (2011:4) continued her attempts to determine how effective single-

gender classrooms were in educating learners. A later mixed-method study involved quantitative and qualitative data collection consisting of three phases. During the first phase, she conducted a focus group with teachers to measure their initial attitudes and perceptions of single-gender classrooms. In the second phase, she analysed quantitative data from surveys that were completed at the beginning of the year. Finally, she administered follow-up teacher surveys at the end of the school year.

Findings from this study suggest that single-gender classrooms affect both teachers' perceptions and the level of learner achievement. Spielhagen (2011:5-6) determined that, throughout the school year, teachers' perceptions of single-gender classrooms altered from enthusiastic to blasé. Results from the final survey also suggested that teachers believed that male and female learners processed information differently. Although this finding seems to support the notion of separate classrooms based on gender, some teachers in her study nevertheless supported the idea of returning to co-educational learning environments. Many participants noted that as the school year progressed, both male and female learners' behaviour became increasingly negative in the single-gender classrooms. As a result, teachers suggested that, rather than the school assigning learners to single-gender classrooms, parents should be allowed to make the decision. This would decrease the disruptive behaviour from learners who do not want to work in a single-gender environment.

Friend (2007:58) also reported mixed results from single-gender schools and argued that schools with the highest achievement improvements were institutions that specialised in supporting learners from low socio-economic backgrounds. Nonetheless, she argued that educators should not use deficiency, in this case lower socio-economic backgrounds, as a reason to separate learners from their peers. Furthermore, she stated that even though males are supposedly weaker in reading while females are weaker in mathematics, they do not require separate schooling to meet their needs.

Overall, researchers presented an assortment of positive, negative, and mixed research results pertaining to the effectiveness of single-gender schools. Researchers who argued for it, stated that single-gender schools had the capability

to reduce the achievement gap between male and female learners. Those who argued against it, voiced concerns that single-gender schools reinforced stereotypes. Lastly, those who presented mixed results could not give a definite answer about whether single-gender schools were beneficial or not.

2.8 RESEARCH RELATING TO SINGLE-GENDER EDUCATION

2.8.1 Overview

There has been substantial research and debate about whether single-gender schooling yields academic and/or social advantages for girls or boys.

Several explanations have been given for differences between single-gender and co-educational settings in educational processes and, ultimately, in learner outcomes. The dominant presence of boys in the classroom is one of the most commonly discussed differences between the two types of settings. Most studies have indicated that boys contribute more to classroom interaction (for example, by calling out answers), they dominate in hands-on activities such as laboratory work, tend to be more disruptive and experience more negative interaction with teachers as a result of their misbehaviour (Smyth, 2010:47). From this perspective, the presence of boys in the classroom is seen to have a negative effect on girls' academic engagement and achievement.

Other researchers have pointed to the distraction characteristic of co-educational settings for adolescents (NYFERA, 2006:2). Several studies have explored the way in which schools serve as a place for the creation of masculinity and femininity. Furthermore, that the manner in which certain subjects such as mathematics and physical sciences may be deemed as masculine, could lead to anxiety and pressure for girls in terms of selecting these subjects and their subsequent academic performance in them (Mendick, 2005, as cited in Smyth, 2010:52).

Dale (1969, as cited in Smyth, 2010:54) conducted one of the first large-scale studies of single-gender education in a British-specific context. His research suggested that co-educational schooling provided the ideal context for adult life for both genders. With regard to academic performance, he further found that girls' educational progress was not disadvantaged by co-education, although the

research findings did indicate certain disadvantages, especially in subjects like mathematics and physical science. A number of studies conducted in Britain in the 1970s and 1980s indicated that girls tended to have higher academic achievement levels in single-gender schools (Deem, 1984, as cited in Smyth, 2010: 49).

Steedman (as cited in NYFERA, 2006:4) used data from the National Child Development Survey pertaining to young people born in 1958 and found that their examination results revealed very little as to whether the learners attended co-educational or single-gender schools. Similarly, other studies conducted in the United Kingdom found no significant advantage for girls in their educational achievement once intake differences among schools were taken into consideration (Smyth, 2010:49).

More recent studies indicated slightly different conclusions on the effects of single-gender education. Spielhofer *et al.* (2004, as cited in Smyth, 2010:50) found that the average academic achievement levels for boys do not differ significantly between single-gender and co-educational schools, but that there are some performance advantages for lower-achieving boys in single-gender schools. Conversely, it was found that girls attending single-gender school had an advantage across a range of achievement outcomes, with the greatest advantages being identified in physical science achievement.

A number of research studies conducted in the United State of America, where single-gender education was limited to the private school sector, have indicated that co-educational schooling had a negative effect on girls' academic achievement because of peer pressure to prioritise relations with the opposite gender rather than schoolwork (Coleman, 1961, as cited in Smyth, 2010:52).

Bryk, Lee, and Holland (1993, as cited in Smyth, 2010:52) used a range of control variables, including social background, prior achievement, etc., in their studies and identified various positive outcomes for girls' academic achievement as well as for social and personal development in single-gender girls' schools.

Gilson (as cited in NYFERA, 2006:6) found no differences in mathematics achievement between single-gender and co-educational school girls, while by comparing single-gender schools with co-educational schools, Riordan (1998)

found a noteworthy achievement advantage to single-gender education for females but no significant difference for males. Riordan also indicated a positive effect of single-gender schooling on school engagement and achievement for both boys and girls but suggested that the effect is much greater for, if not limited to, low socio-economic status, and ethnic minority learners.

A number of studies that examine the effects of single-gender education have also been conducted within the context of the Australian education system. Carpenter's study (NYFERA, 2006:5; Smyth, 2010:52) indicated that there was very little, if any difference between single-gender and co-educational schools with regard to learner performance, even though a range of factors were controlled, including social background, and prior performance. Yates and Firkin (1986, as cited in Smyth, 2010:54), on the other hand, found that learners regarded as high performers in mathematics were more likely to come from single-gender schools.

The above-mentioned research demonstrates considerable variations between countries in terms of the conclusions that were drawn, depending on the research methods and analytical techniques employed. Consequently, there appears to be very little consensus on whether single-gender education is beneficial to the academic achievement of girls or boys.

There are four general, intersecting fields of focus in the research that compares single-gender to co-educational schooling, namely:

- *Achievement* – measured by standardised test scores;
- *School subjects* – most often mathematics, physical sciences, life sciences and English;
- *Attitudes*– these include feelings, opinions, and thoughts about one's classroom or school environment, school subjects, or self, and;
- Sexism and gender stereotyping.

2.8.2 Achievement

Most studies relating to single-gender education found no significant differences in academic achievement when factors such as prior achievement and socio-economic status were controlled (Baker *et al.* 1995; Young & Fraser, 1990). Young

and Fraser (1990:8) state that the popular claim that single-gender schools are superior to co-educational schools when it comes to reducing gender differences is not supported by evidence from past research.

The importance of controlling in terms of socio-economic status has been stressed by Marsh (1989), and Young and Fraser (1990), with the latter pointing out that controlling with regard to socio-economic status has its own problems. In addition, Weaver-Hightower (2008:86) indicated that the influence that socio-economic status has on academic achievement varied among different cultural environments.

The effects that socio-economic status has on learner achievement also relates to comparing co-educational public schools to single-gender private schools. Similarities such as high socio-economic status, prior academic achievement, parental support, and gender are all factors, which help to create an environment of discrepancy and an increased attachment and commitment to school for learners. Thompson and Ungerleider (2004:12) found that the contribution of a school ethos to learner achievement levels was consistently mentioned in studies assessing single-gender schooling and its benefits to academic achievement.

2.8.3 School subjects

Some studies that focused on academic achievement did so within the context of specific subject areas, such as mathematics, physical science, and life sciences. Mathematics and physical science generated the most interest (Thompson & Ungerleider, 2004:12-13), while language, drama, art, and information technology appeared less frequently in the literature. Studies investigating single-gender education and mathematics and/or physical science frequently did so relative to the effects on only girls.

Thompson and Ungerleider (2004:13) maintained that the general findings were mixed since some studies found an increase in mathematics and/or physical science achievement, while others did not find any significant achievement differences among boys and girls. These variations in results are very likely caused by the use of different assessment tools and methodologies implemented by the various researchers. For instance, while some studies used standardised tests to determine learner improvement, others used teacher assessments, and classroom

grades to do the same. In addition, other studies made use of both forms of assessment. This issue of variation was highlighted in a study focused on achievement in science conducted by Thompson and Ungerleider, (2004:13) in which the researchers compared boys and girls who attend single-gender schools with boys and girls who attend co-educational schools. Girls from single-gender schools had the lowest scores, even though they received the highest classroom grades.

The problem most often noted in terms of comparing single-gender schools to co-educational schools was the fact that single-gender schools were mainly private, whereas co-educational schools were predominantly government schools. Marsh (1989:328) argued that such comparisons are disconcerting for a number of reasons, including the fact that single-gender schools are typically academically selective and their learners are generally from higher socio-economic backgrounds. These learners also differ from co-educational learners on a variety of other pre-existing variables.

2.8.4 Attitude

The theme of learners' attitudes and their sense of well-being in the comparative school settings are closely linked to the theme of using single-gender education to break down barriers of gendered subject areas. Crombie and Abarnel (2002) and Gillibrand and Robinson (1999) stated that girls reported less anxiety, more confidence, and expressed a more positive attitude towards subjects that are stereotypically male subjects within the single-gender setting (Campbell & Evans, 1997; Streitmatter, 1997).

In many studies (Campbell & Evans, 1997; Streitmatter, 1997; Gillibrand & Robinson, 1999; Thompson & Ungerleider, 2004; Crombie & Abarnel, 2002) it has been noted that girls in single-gender schools benefit both psychologically and socially. Girls repeatedly reported that they enjoyed single-gender schooling more than the co-educational schooling and that they felt more comfortable and less disturbed by disruptive behaviours in a single-gender setting. However, when boys were asked which class or school type they preferred, boys were typically indifferent or preferred co-educational classes. The boys who disliked single-gender schooling

explained that they often found boys-only classrooms to be disruptive, hostile, and aggressive. Jackson (2002:41) and Askew and Ross (1988, as cited in Smyth, 2010:14) found that single-gender boys' schools were characterised by increased bullying and that it seemed as though the weaker boys would take the place of girls and provide a means for the other boys to prove their masculinity. Therefore, while girls reported that their feelings of intimidation were alleviated in a single-gender setting, it seems that just the opposite was true of boys, in that they experienced heightened feelings of intimidation and bullying in the single-gender setting.

2.8.5 Sexism and gender stereotyping

Various studies (Lee & Marks, 1994; Crombie & Abarnel, 2002; Jackson, 2002; Martino & Meyenn, 2002) addressed the connection between the benefits of single-gender schooling and the issue of sexism and gender stereotyping that occur in schools. They indicated that the mere existence of single-gender schools signalled a discrepancy or inequality based solely on gender. On the other hand, feminist and social justice advocates supported and campaigned for the same single-gender schools initiatives and policies as the neo-conservative Christian groups, although the issue was often approached from different ideological perspectives (Arnot, 2007:220-223).

This means that feminists and social justice advocates have also found themselves on opposite sides of the argument. While some maintain that single-gender schooling will provide girls with safe, unintimidating learning environments where they can thrive and develop their confidence, others contend that the curriculum, which privileges masculinity and patriarchy, will continue to flourish unless policy initiatives restrict male supremacy and inequalities produced through the current educational models (Arnot, 2002:223).

Lee and Marks (1994:97) voiced some of the common findings in research on sexism in the classroom, stating that boys receive more attention from teachers and generally dominate classroom activities as a result of their behaviour. As previously mentioned, there is an inclination to stereotype subject areas according to gender, particularly in the fields of mathematics and physical science because of male-focused examples and illustrations in textbooks, expectations of teachers, disapproval of peers, and the lack of role models in these fields.

2.9 PARENTAL CHOICE OF SCHOOL

According to Oxford dictionary, the word 'choice' is defined as the right or possibility of choosing or selecting (Rundell, 2002:194). Consequently, school choice would mean that parents, legal guardians and learners have the right to select a school of their choice.

Koebe (2003, as cited in Venter, 2011:10) stated that school choice is about selecting the school that offers the best opportunities for your children and in South Africa, the choice of a school has a legal foundation as formulated in its Constitution (South Africa, 1996a). According to Section 29(2) of the Constitution (South Africa, 1996a), every person has the right to receive education in a public education institution of their choice, where the education is reasonable, practicable, and in the language of their choice.

School choice in South Africa is determined by the choice between homeschooling, independent/private schools, and government schools and the parents/legal guardians have the right to choose the school of their choice, although these schools must comply with the South African Schools Act (South Africa, 1996b). Research (Maile, 2004; Venter, 2011) indicates that parents have different reasons for choosing the appropriate school for their children.

2.9.1 General reasons for parents' choice of school

Maile (2004:95) argues that school choice is determined by market theories that include factors such as competition, services, and quality determine demand and supply. Similarly, schools are also dependent on these factors for their own survival.

When parents enrol their children in a specific school, they do so believing that the school will offer the best quality in terms of teaching and learning. In the decision-making process, the school is regarded as an effective school because of the following reasons (Maile, 2004:102):

- good management of learner's time;
- good monitoring of learner progress;
- a good relationship with parents;
- safe and positive learning environment;

- a clear mission statement and focus on academics; and
- high expectations from learners to perform academically, in sport, or culture.

Woods, Bagley and Glatter (1998, as cited in Venter, 2011:11) argue that the best way to understand the parents' choice would be to look at how family dynamics play an integral part in their choices. The choice of school made for the first child is often the 'pathfinder' for the other children to follow.

Plank and Sykes (2003, as cited in Venter, 2011:12) states that in some countries, such as Belgium, and Netherlands, education services for all schools are subsidised by the state. However, in France, South Africa and Germany, traditional norms of equity and standardised treatment continue to be dominant, and judgement regarding schooling remains the right of the state and educational professionals. This may be due to the limited school choices offered to parents, the financial implications, and limited public transport. Some parents are even prepared to travel long distances and pass several schools to reach a specific school of choice (Li & Hung, 2009, as cited in Venter, 2011:18).

2.9.2 Reasons why parents choose single-gender schools

David (1997, as cited in Jackson & Bisset, 2005:195) found that very little of the research based on the parental choice of school has focused on single-gender schooling, and yet it is important to consider the ways in which gender influences parents and/or their children in their choice of schools. Gender issues become particularly noticeable when a choice exists between single-gender schools and co-educational schools.

In research conducted by Jackson and Bisset (2005:200), it was found that only 45% of the parents who chose single-gender schools for their children, identified single-gender education as the reason for their choice of school. In other words, 55% of parents who chose single-gender education for their children reported that the fact that the school was a single-gender school was not an important factor in their decision-making process. The choice of school was rather based on factors such as the tradition of the school, one of the parents, or grandparents attended the school, the school's sport or academic results, and overall reputation.

Various research studies (West & Varlaam, 1991; David *et al.*, 1994; Noden *et al.*, 1998; Robinson & Smithers, 1999; Jackson & Bisset, 2005) suggest that the child's gender is a significant factor in the type of school the parents chose. For instance, Jackson and Bisset (2005:196-201) found that 37% of the parents of boys identified single-gender education as a factor influencing their choice of school, compared to 54% of the parents of girls. Thus, parents of girls are more likely than parents of boys to prefer single-gender schooling. The main reasons why parents of girls are more likely to choose single-gender schools for their daughters is because they believe these schools are more aware of the particular needs of girls and that these schools can address the perceived weakness girls may have in mathematics and physical science.

A study by Jackson and Bisset (2005) shows us the characteristics that parents deem important when choosing a single-gender school. These are presented in Table 2.1 below.

TABLE 2. 1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A SCHOOLS

	GIRLS		BOYS	
	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary
An emphasis on sport	7	7	1	6
The ability to address the perceived weakness girls may have in mathematics/physical science OR boys may have in English	2	4	3	4
No distraction from the opposite gender in class	4	3	6	3
A strong emphasis on the teaching of physical science	5	2	2	1
A strong emphasis on the arts	6	5	7	7
The presence of many female teachers for girls or male teachers for boys as good role models	3	6	4	2
An awareness of the particular needs of girls or boys	1	1	5	5

Table 2.1 shows the characteristics of schools that parents look at when selecting a single-gender school (presented in terms of rank order where 1 is most important and 7 is least important.) (Jackson & Bisset, 2005:201). It indicates that the parents of girls generally choose single-gender schools for their daughters based the schools' capacity to cater for the particular need of girls and a strong emphasis on physical science and mathematics education. Among the parents of boys, the capacity to cater for the particular needs of boys generally carried little weight and was average in both primary and secondary schools. The most important factor for parents of boys in primary schools was the school's emphasis on sport, whereas in secondary schools the most important factor was physical science education.

Jackson and Bisset (2005:203) found that parents generally had a perception that co-educational schools already cater for the needs of boys and, therefore, choosing a single-gender school is less of a concern for parents of boys than it is for the parents of girls.

Jackson and Bisset (2005:204) also found that there was a belief among parents that learners obtain better academic results at single-gender schools but that co-educational schools had social advantages, particularly for boys. Parents who chose single-gender schools deemed the academic results and the reputation of the schools as very important. Often, it was the academic reputation of the school rather than the single-gender or co-educational nature of the school that was the most important factor in school choice.

Similar research conducted by West and Varlaam (1991:24) found that issues of single-gender and co-educational schooling were not prominent factors when parents were choosing schools. Hunter's research (1991:36) suggested that the three aspects most frequently cited by parents as being most important when choosing a school were discipline, an emphasis on good academic results, and the fact that the school was single-gender or co-educational. However, Shaw (1984, as cited in Jackson & Bisset, 2005:196) and Arnot (2007:208) found that single-gender schools are commonly associated with boarding facilities and classical education. Thus, the notion that single-gender schooling is associated with elite, high status education still influences parents' perceptions about the status of single-gender schools and idea of what constitutes a good school.

Whether a school is single-gender or co-educational is a key factor for many parents. The perception still prevails that single-gender education has advantages for girls while co-education presents advantages for boys (Jackson & Bisset, 2005:208). Parents' views about school types are divided by social versus academic differences with single-gender schools being seen to have academic benefits (especially for girls) but co-educational schools having social benefits (especially for boys).

2.10 CONCLUSION

The review of the literature on single-gender education highlights several key themes important to the current study. Recent and previous studies of single-gender education have consisted of a number of themes, some of which address academic achievement, others less so. Most of the research found in the literature, however, studies the different ways in which education can be structured and delivered to best meet the needs of the learners. No research could be found on how single-gender education influences peer pressure or whether peer pressure would increase or decrease in the absence of the opposite gender.

Concerns arise when researchers examine single-gender and co-educational schooling since co-educational schools are generally government schools, whereas single-gender schools are generally private, independent schools. There are integral differences between the government and private school systems in South Africa, as well as differences in student backgrounds and characteristics. As noted above, pre-existing assumptions and differences already exist when parents make the choice to enrol their children in either the government or private system. Therefore, the current study must attempt to control these differences if the results are to be considered valid and meaningful. This will be done by only choosing either government schools or private schools.

The literature that was reviewed suggested that co-educational schools are believed to have a positive effect on the social and personal development of learners, while single-gender schools are believed to positively influence academic performance because of reduced stereotyped subject choices and increased confidence. There was little evidence to support these claims in the empirical studies that were

performed to analyse the academic performance of learners in co-educational and single-gender schools. The majority of the research indicates that single-gender schooling has hardly any or no influence at all on the social and personal development or academic performance of adolescents.

Since the literature did not provide a definitive, conclusive answer, the question of whether single-gender schools provide a better learning environment for boys remains. While some studies suggest that academic achievement, self-esteem, and locus of control are higher in single-gender schools, others found no difference between boys who attend single-gender or co-educational schools in terms of the previously mentioned variables.

In conclusion, existing literature suggests that there are no conclusive answers on the advantages and disadvantages of single-gender education at this point in time.

CHAPTER THREE

PEER PRESSURE DURING ADOLESCENCE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the aim of the current study is to determine how boys at single-gender schools experience peer pressure and, therefore, an analysis will be presented at the end of this chapter. This chapter includes a review of various elements pertaining to the definition of peer groups and pressure, namely:

- the definition of a peer group;
- what peer groups offer adolescents;
- facets of adolescent peer relations;
- peer pressure and its influence on academic performance and socialisation in adolescents;
- gender and its manifestation within adolescent peer groups; and
- contributing factors linked to negative and positive peer pressure.

The development of adolescents will be analysed to determine why they become more susceptible to peer pressure during this specific phase in their lives, after which an analysis of peer pressure and all the above-mentioned components of peer pressure will be discussed.

The first section of this chapter will focus on adolescent development. The various developmental changes that adolescents undergo during this developmental stage will be investigated. Physiological changes during puberty will be explored to determine how adolescents' bodies change during this life stage and how physiological development can influence peer pressure. Thereafter, cognitive development will be discussed, focusing on the three main cognitive changes adolescents undergo, namely the development of more advanced reasoning skills, the development of skills pertaining to abstract thought and, lastly, becoming more aware of other individuals and how they should be treated.

The development theory of Jean Piaget (Piaget, 1936, as cited in Cobb, 2010:113) will be discussed, distinguishing three characteristics of adolescent cognitive

development. He named these as being formal operations, hypothetico-deductive reasoning, and propositional thought.

Following the discussion of cognitive development, affective development during adolescence will be analysed. Affective development is particularly important since it involves establishing a realistic and coherent sense of self among other things (Santrock, 2001:46). Thereafter, moral development will be discussed since as adolescents' cognitive, emotional, and social development continues to mature, their understanding of morality increases and their behaviour becomes more closely aligned with their values and beliefs. Moral development describes the evolution of their values and beliefs and is demonstrated by the ability to apply their values and beliefs in daily life (Cobb, 2010:366-367).

Subsequently, social development will be discussed. During adolescence, social networks significantly expand to include more people and many different types of relationships. Adolescent social development involves a dramatic change in the quantity and quality of social relationships and peer groups become increasingly important as adolescents experience more attachment in these friendships and may lead to more gratifying relationships with their peers. Peer groups will therefore be explored as pertaining to social development. Peer groups will be defined and the different types of peer groups, as grouped by Brown (1990:189), will then be discussed. Thereafter, the functions of the peer group will be examined. These functions include social interactions and communication, security, confidence and support, social skills and roles, and the development of self-concept, to name a few (Schuld, 1999:10). The factors that influence the formation of peer groups will then be highlighted to determine why certain peer groups are formed. This section will be followed by a discussion on peer pressure.

Peer pressure will be defined and peer pressure mechanisms will be identified and examined to determine why adolescents conform to peer pressure. A distinction between negative and positive group pressure will be made. Thereafter, the focus will shift to negative peer pressure. In the literature, most of the research relating to peer pressure defines peer pressure as being negative. Peer pressure strongly influences behaviour in children and adolescents, influencing them to say what is believed to be the "right" thing, to wear the "right" clothes, or to coerce them into

performing negative behaviours (such as using illicit drugs, drinking, cheating on a test) (Schuld, 1999:16). Typical behaviour related to negative peer pressure will be discussed and includes issues such as smoking, drug and alcohol use, anti-social behaviour, crime and poor academic performance (Brechwald & Prinstein, 2011:173).

With regard to the next section of this chapter, the focus will be on positive peer influence. Typical behaviour related to positive peer influence will be discussed. These behaviours include academic performance, extra-curricular participation, pro-social behaviour, and good family relationships. (Poteat, 2007 and Poteat, Espelage, & Green, 2007, as cited in Brechwald & Prinstein, 2011:166).

There are certain factors that relate to both positive and negative peer pressure and include gender, age, cognitive functioning, academic performance, self-concept, and parent-child relationships (Fourie, 2001:137). Each of these factors will be explored to determine why adolescents conform to peer pressure, regardless of whether it is positive or negative peer pressure.

In the last section of this chapter, the possible outcomes of peer pressure will be discussed, which may be positive or negative (Clasen & Brown, 1987:21). Peer pressure provides for pro-social as well as anti-social influences (Clasen & Brown, 1985:467). Due to this two-sided nature of peer pressure, the peer group does have the potential to have a pro-social influence on the adolescent in the presence of anti-social behaviour (Brown *et al.*, 1986:529).

3.2 ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT

Adolescence is a developmental stage that spans from the onset of puberty to adulthood. The exact period of adolescence, which varies from person to person, falls approximately between the ages 12 and 20 years, and encompasses both physiological and psychological changes (Salamone, 2010:90).

3.2.1 Physiological development

Physiological changes lead to sexual maturity and usually occur during the first few years of adolescence. These physical changes are known as puberty and generally

take place in girls between the ages of 8 and 14 years, and boys between the ages of 9 and 16 years (Salamone, 2010:90).

There are numerous factors that affect the onset and development of puberty, including genetic and biological influences, stressful life events, socio-economic status, nutrition and diet, the amount of body fat, and the presence of a chronic illness. The growth spurt, which involves rapid skeletal growth, usually begins at about ages 10 to 12 years in girls and 12 to 14 years in boys. It is completed at the approximate age of 17 to 19 years in girls and 17 to 20 years in boys (Gentry & Campbell, 2002:7).

For most adolescents, sexual maturation involves the commencement of fertility and the physical changes that support it. During puberty, the pituitary gland increases its production of gonadotropins, which stimulates the production of primarily oestrogen in girls, and primarily testosterone in boys. Oestrogen and testosterone are responsible for bodily changes such as breast development, the growth of facial and body hair, and the deepening of voice (Gentry & Campbell, 2002:7).

According to Conger and Galambos (1997:72), the effects of early or late maturation influences the way that the adolescents view themselves and how they are viewed by others. Boys who mature early seem to benefit from it within their peer group. These boys are more likely to be treated as more mature, they tend to become involved in boy-girl relationships sooner and have an advantage in many activities, especially sport, due to their more rugged physique and increased strength. They also tend to be more popular within the peer group and are often selected for leadership roles within the peer group. Consequently, early-maturing boys experience less peer pressure.

In contrast, the late-maturing boy is more likely to be treated like a child and finds it more difficult to excel in sporting activities as well as establishing relationships with girls. According to research (Gentry & Campbell, 2002; Salomone, 2010), late-maturing males tend to be more tense, talkative, self-conscious, restless, impulsive, attention-seeking, and less popular with their peers. Late-maturing boys tend to conform to peer pressure more easily in order for them to be accepted by the peer group (Fourie, 2001:73).

Conversely, girls who mature early tend to conform more easily to peer pressure in order for them to be accepted by their peer group. These girls also tend to be more popular with older boys and, therefore, do not develop normal heterosexual relationships with their peer group, which leads to inadequate social development and acceptance by the peer group (Fourie, 2001:72).

Late-maturing girls, however, are more popular in their peer groups; therefore, they will experience less peer pressure as they do not require the approval of their peers in order to belong to the group (Fourie, 2001:72).

Apart from physiological changes, a range of psychological, emotional, cognitive, and social changes are evident throughout adolescence, varying significantly from person to person and from one culture to another (Gentry & Campbell, 2002:3).

3.2.2 Cognitive development

Adolescents develop more advanced reasoning skills, including the ability to cognitively process several factors in a particular situation. They are able to think hypothetically and to use logical thought (Eccles *et al.*, 2003:325). They develop abstract thought and can think about objects without having direct contact with them and can imagine things not seen or experienced. Jean Piaget (Piaget, 1936, as cited by Cobb, 2010:112), used the term “formal operations” to describe this phase of cognitive development and refers to the ability to perform mental operations with abstract, immaterial concepts such as “justice” or “poverty”. This includes the ability to predict or describe the possible effects of abstract, immaterial concepts. Adolescents can mentally embody circumstances or events that they have never physically seen, or personally experienced before (Cobb, 2010:114).

Due to their cognitive advancements, adolescents become more aware of other individuals’ internal psychological characteristics, such as personality, motives, and beliefs. Friendships are often based on perceived similarities of these internal psychological characteristics (Eccles *et al.*, 2003:326). Adolescents can interpret information and make reasonable conclusions about what another person may be thinking, wanting, needing, or feeling by observing other people’s behaviour, expressions, comments and appearances. In addition, adolescents also begin to contemplate what other people may be thinking about them (Wilson & Hadley,

2002:58; Cobb, 2010:116). This often results in egocentric behaviour, which appears at the same time that younger adolescents are struggling with insecurities about their changing appearance, identity, and life experiences. Egocentrism during adolescence manifests as imaginary audience and personal fable. The term “imaginary audience” was introduced by David Elkind (1967, as cited in Ryan & Kuczkowski, 1994:220) to refer to the tendency of adolescents to falsely assume that their appearance or behaviour is the focus of other’s attention. The other aspect of egocentrism is referred to as the “personal fable”. Elkind (1967, as cited in Galanaki, 2012:457) described the personal fable as the adolescent’s inner belief that he or she is special or unique, invincible, invulnerable, and therefore in a position to take risks. The personal fable has been used to explain certain adolescent risk-taking behaviours, such as unprotected sex, excessive drug and alcohol use and driving recklessly.

When adolescents’ reasoning is absolute, rigid or demanding, they tend to reach irrational conclusions that lead to highly stressful and goal-defeating consequences (Gonzalez *et al.*, 2004:223). Albert Ellis (Ellis & Ellis, 2011:130) defines irrational beliefs as self-defeating beliefs that lead to debilitating and unhealthy negative emotions. Irrational beliefs are not founded in facts or reality and exaggerate the truth. Ellis (in David *et al.*, 2010:6) states that such beliefs as illogical, inaccurate or distorted ideas that are firmly held despite contradictory evidence. Typical examples of irrational beliefs are given by Mahoney and Kaufman (1997:686) and include the assumption that one should be loved and accepted by others, and the fear of not being perfectly competent in all instances. Irrational beliefs also reflects the belief that problems have perfect solutions or that problems should be avoided instead of solving them. Bester (2014:319) stated that adolescents who experience peer pressure have an unrealistic need for recognition and acceptance. According to research done by Bester (2014:320), findings show that susceptibility to peer pressure mainly relates to three irrational beliefs, namely the belief that “one should be loved and accepted by others”, that “difficult situations should be avoided or overlooked” and the belief that “you need to rely on someone or something that is stronger than you”.

3.2.3 Affective development

Emotional development during adolescence involves, among other things, establishing a realistic and coherent sense of identity in the context of relating to others and learning to cope with stress and the managing of emotions (Santrock, 2001:45). Identity refers to more than simply how adolescents see themselves. It also includes the “possible self”, a term that refers to what individuals might become and who they would like to become (Gentry & Campbell, 2002:15). Forming a sense of identity has traditionally been considered the fundamental task of adolescence, although it is now commonly accepted that identity formation neither begins nor ends during adolescence. Nonetheless, adolescence is the first time individuals have the cognitive capacity to consciously explore who they are and what makes them unique. Closely linked to this formation of identity is the development of the self-concept, which will now be discussed (Gentry & Campbell, 2002:15).

Self-concept refers to an individual's own perceptions, both positive and negative, of his or her attributes, traits, and abilities (Luhr, 2005:491). Self-concept refers to an adolescent's perceptions of competence or adequacy in academic and non-academic domains, the latter including social, behavioural, and athletic spheres and reflects how an adolescent evaluates him/herself in these domains that he or she considers important. According to Manning *et al.* (2006:342), an adolescent can have a high self-concept in some domains and a low self-concept in others.

Makhubu (2014:27) maintains that since self-concept is viewed from a multi-dimensional perspective, adolescents form their unique self-concept through feedback from significant others within six primary contexts that are identified as social, competence, affective, academic, family and physical contexts.

Dimensions of self-concept, self-concept during adolescence and how self-concept relates to peer pressure will be discussed.

3.2.3.1 Dimensions of self-concept

Gilman *et al.* (2009:92-94) identify six self-concept domains, these being the following:

- *Academic self-concept*: This represents how the adolescents feel about themselves in a school or academic setting or in relation to their academic performance.
- *Affect self-concept*: This is a self-evaluative awareness and acceptance of an individual's affective state and is what causes the individual to experience different affective states.
- *Competence self-concept*: This can be defined as an individual's evaluation of their own ability to meet their basic needs.
- *Family self-concept*: This term refers to how individuals feel about being part of their family and is dependent on factors such as family size, physical and mental health of family members and parenting styles.
- *Physical self-concept*: This refers to how individuals feel about being themselves as a physical person and includes aspects such as physical appearance (e.g. hair, eye and skin colour), health and physical limitations (e.g. disabilities or chronic health issues) and prowess (e.g. stamina and athletic ability).
- *Social self-concept*: This term represents how individuals feel about their ability to interact with others, participate socially, and be accepted in a social setting.

3.2.3.2 Self-concept during adolescence

An increased focus on the self during adolescence leads to changing self-perceptions, a process known as individuation (the process by which individuals in society become differentiated from one another) that involves a gradual assimilation of all the various perceptions and feelings that individuals have about themselves into a unified functioning whole, termed the self-concept (Orr, 2013:37).

In the transition from childhood to adolescence, individuals begin to develop more abstract characterisations of themselves and self-concepts become more differentiated and better organised. Adolescents begin to view themselves in terms of personal beliefs and standards, and less in terms of social comparisons (Harter, 1998:507). Middle adolescence is marked by individuals describing themselves in ways that are occasionally discrepant (e.g. “shy when I am with friends, outgoing when I am with my family...”), but these discrepancies tend to decline in later years

with adolescents forming a more consistent view of themselves (Steinberg & Morris, 2001:92).

3.2.3.3 Self-concept and peer pressure

Recent studies (Cohen & Prinstein, 2006:975; Prinstein, 2007:16) show that susceptibility to peer pressure is higher among adolescents who are insecure about themselves and their social identity; in other words, adolescents with a low self-concept. Adolescents with a high self-concept feel more satisfied with themselves, which may give them the sense of security with the result that they put less effort into meeting the expectations of their peers (Lebedina-Manzoni & Ricijaš, 2013:45). Fourie (2001:212) identified self-concept as the most important variable relating to peer pressure.

3.2.4 Moral development

Morality refers to the way people choose to live their lives according to a set of guidelines or principles that direct their decisions about right versus wrong and good versus evil. As adolescents' cognitive, emotional and social development continue to mature, their understanding of morality increases, and their behaviour becomes more closely aligned with their values and beliefs. Therefore, moral development describes the evolution of these guiding principles and is demonstrated by the ability to apply these guidelines in daily life (Cobb, 2010:366-367).

Piaget (1936, as cited in Conger & Galambos, 1997:268) stated that the organisation of moral thought in younger children is distinct from that found in adolescents and adults and went on to argue that younger children (5 to 10 years) base their morality largely on the consequences of their actions; in other words, rules handed down by authority figures (parents, teachers, etc.). These rules are seen as unbreakable and outright. The child's reasoning as to why these rules should be followed is generally based on their experience of the consequences associated with breaking these rules (Conger & Galambos, 1997:268-269).

Individuals experiencing early adolescence are able to view situations from other people's perspectives and, therefore, are better able to understand other's situations and viewpoints. In this time, adolescents' morality becomes more

autonomous and they start viewing moral rules as socially-agreed upon guidelines designed to benefit society (Fourie, 2001:124).

Kohlberg (1969, as cited in Killen & Smetana, 2014:8) expanded on Piaget's general propositions regarding moral development and developed a six-stage sequence of moral development separated according to four levels of reasoning (Kohlberg & Gilligan, 1971:1067; Conger & Galambos, 1997:270). I will now examine Kohlberg's model in more detail.

3.2.4.1 Kohlberg's model of moral development

Below is an explanation of the elements of Kohlberg's model of moral reasoning (Kohlberg, 1969, as cited in Killen & Smetana, 2014:8-9).

Level 1: Preconventional reasoning

Stage 1 – Punishment - obedience

During preschool years, the child responds to cultural labels of “good” and “bad” but interprets these labels in terms of their tangible consequences. Subsequently, the child behaves in an appropriate manner in order to avoid punishment rather than for the sake of doing the right thing.

Stage 2 – Instrumental hedonism

During this stage, the child is more likely to conform to rules in order to obtain rewards or have favours returned. The emphasis shifts from avoiding punishment to obtaining rewards.

Level 2: Conventional reasoning

Stage 3 – Good boy – good girl

During adolescence, a focus on societal needs and values take precedence over individual interests. The emphasis shifts to behaving according to the stereotyped images of “natural” behaviour and effort is made to secure approval and maintain friendly relations with others.

Stage 4 – Authority maintenance

During this stage, the emphasis is on fixed rules and the maintenance of social order through following the rules. In his later research, Kohlberg (Conger & Galambos, 1997:271) argued that many adolescents and adults may not advance beyond this stage in moral development.

Level 3: Postconventional reasoning

Stage 5 – Social contract

During this stage, the individual moves towards abstract moral principles, which are universally applicable and not only tied to any particular social group as in previous stages. The individual strives to make life better for everyone.

Stage 6 – Universal principle

During this stage, the individual reasons from his own beliefs and formulates abstract ethical principles, which include equal rights for all human beings and respect for the dignity of human beings as individuals.

Conger and Galambos (1997: 271) found that individuals transition from one stage of moral development to the next, in a slow, gradual manner with considerable overlap occurring between the stages.

According to Killen and Smetana (2014:347), peer interactions are important for facilitating moral development since adolescents acquire skills such as bargaining, compromising and developing an understanding of others through reciprocal negotiations with their peers. Consequently, adolescents often engage in illegal or anti-social behaviour to gain the approval of their peers with some reasoning that their moral misconduct is justified since it provides them with a sense of self-worth, protection, or satisfaction.

Rice and Dolgin (2008:334) state that peers have an influence on adolescents' pro-social, anti-social, or morally neutral behaviour. In their research, they found that

the closer the adolescents' friends are, the higher their level of moral reasoning is likely to be.

Fourie (2001:125) states that the degree of adolescents' involvement with their peer group could influence the adolescents' opinion about morality, since adolescents who are part of a peer group are under obligation to conform to the group's moral principles. Kohlberg (in Fourie, 2001:126) also found that adolescents who do not belong to a peer group have a more immature level of moral reasoning compared to adolescents who are part of a group. This implies that adolescents who are part of peer groups are more mature in their moral reasoning.

3.2.5 Social development

Social and emotional development are closely interwoven since emotional regulation (remaining in control of emotions) and emotional expression (effective communication about emotions) are necessary components for successful interpersonal relationships. Because the individual becomes emotionally aware they have the ability to recognise and understand their own feelings and actions and those of other people, and how their own feelings and actions affect themselves and others. This drives an individual to communicate, connect with others, and more importantly, helps resolve conflicts, gain confidence, and reach goals. These skills help individuals establish quality relationships with others (Moore, 1992:2). Furthermore, advanced cognitive development enhances the quality of interpersonal relationships because it enables adolescents to better understand the wants, needs, and feelings of others. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that just as adolescents' thoughts, emotions, and identities are becoming more complex, their social relationships are likewise becoming more complex in nature (Cobb, 2010:369).

Adolescents will start to form many different types of relationships and many of their relationships will become more deeply involved and emotionally intimate. During children's younger years, their social sphere mainly includes their family, a few friends, teachers, and perhaps a coach (Cobb, 2010:369-370). However, during adolescence, their social networks significantly expand to include more people and many different types of relationships. Therefore, adolescent social development involves a dramatic change in the quantity and quality of social relationships. In

addition, they also become more dependent on their peer relationships and distancing themselves from their relationships with their parents (Conger & Galambos, 1997:177). Research (Bibby & Posterski, 1992:148) shows that adolescents believe that a close friend offers several advantages over parents in that he/she understands them better, they can be themselves more easily, and they can learn more from that friend than from their parents.

Because being accepted by a peer group becomes of great importance, adolescents may transform their speech, dress, behaviour, choices and activities in order to become more like their peers. This increased similarity among peers provides them with a sense of security and affirms their acceptance into their chosen peer group (Cobb, 2010:370). The developmental theorist Erik Erickson, (1950, as cited in Pervin & John, 2001:102), identified this as a psychosocial stage of development and described this as a crisis of identity versus identity confusion.

Since it is important for adolescents to fit in with their peer group, they may decide to participate in the same hobbies or activities as their friends. This enables them to spend more time together and to bond over shared experiences (Cobb, 2010:370-371). In general, adolescents will gravitate towards peer groups with whom they share common interests, similar cultural backgrounds, or simply a similar outlook on life. But often, as adolescents experiment with their identity, they may be attracted to peer groups with very dissimilar interests (Pervin & John, 2001:102).

During the early and middle adolescent years, there is more frequent conflict between adolescents and their parents. This is often because adolescents are trying to assert their individuality and are exercising their independence. Adolescents may, therefore, rebel against their parents' authority and values as part of their identity development process (Pervin & John, 2001:102-103).

Fortunately, this period of uncomfortable tension and conflict between adolescents and their parents does not go on forever. Typically, adolescents will once again become closer to their parents during late adolescence. According to Cobb (2010:371), the conflict between parents and adolescents declines for several reasons. Firstly, parents' roles change during late adolescence as they are no longer required to be the disciplinarian. More mature adolescents are now better

equipped to distinguish between right and wrong. Secondly, because of their greater cognitive and emotional maturity, adolescents are able to have more mature relationships with everyone, including their parents.

Additionally, sibling relationships will also change during this time. The extent of these changes will depend upon the number of siblings in the family, whether the siblings are older or younger than the adolescent, and the number of years between siblings (Pervin & John, 2001:103).

During the early stages of adolescence, adolescents may begin to distance themselves from their younger siblings, especially those siblings in the early and middle childhood years (Pervin & John, 2001:103). As adolescents' interests change and mature, they may no longer feel that they have anything in common with their younger siblings.

Adolescents may become increasingly annoyed with their younger siblings' efforts to join them in activities because they greatly value their privacy and relish the exclusive quality of their peer relationships. A younger sibling's persistent efforts to maintain a peer-like relationship with their maturing brother or sister is often experienced as intrusive (Pervin & John, 2001:103).

By middle adolescence, adolescents will typically become closer to their older and younger siblings who are nearest to their own age. By late adolescence, sibling bonds will continue to strengthen, especially if siblings had previously enjoyed a loving relationship when they were younger. By late adolescence, siblings without a large age difference will often grow closer to each other since they share similar experiences. Due to their increased cognitive maturity, even adolescents with much younger siblings are less likely to be annoyed by their siblings since these more mature adolescents now understand the needs and wants of their younger siblings. As a result, they can respond to their younger siblings with greater patience and compassion (Cobb, 2010:371-372).

While relationships with peers during adolescence may prove positive, they may also be harmful as this is a vulnerable stage of development. Adolescents may be pressured by their peers into suspending their better judgement and engage in behaviours that they may later regret (Conger & Galambos, 1997:177). Such

behaviours can range from damaging school property to drug and alcohol abuse. In such situations, the adolescents' autonomy, self-confidence and personal values may be strained (Savin-Williams & Berndt, 1990:306). According to Parkhurst and Asher (1992:236), being accepted by peers in general and having one or two close friends, can make a great difference in the adolescent's life. The peer acceptance that adolescents experience during their social interactions, affect their self-evaluations and perceptions and can have outcomes of greater emotional stability, thus healthy, positive behaviours. In contrast, feelings of rejection from peers, can lead to aggression, delinquency, isolation and negative views of the self (Ramtahal-Metivier, 2009:25).

3.2.6 Conclusion with regard to adolescent development and the theoretical framework for this investigation

When viewing adolescent development, it is important to be able to move from a general overview of the pattern of development to an explanation of the specific processes at each life stage. Erikson's psychosocial theory has been selected as an integrating theoretical orientation in this study because Erikson's theory has a number of implications for the manner in which distressing developmental problems that arise during adolescence can be identified and understood. Due to the nature of this research, the developmental tasks, the psychosocial crisis and the central process for resolving the crisis that specifically relates to the early adolescent and late adolescent stages provide a useful platform to further understand the motivational forces behind peer influence.

According to Erikson there are eight crises in development. These are expressed in polarities – trust versus mistrust, autonomy versus shame and doubt, initiative versus guilt, industry versus inferiority, identity versus role diffusion, intimacy versus isolation, generativity versus stagnation and integrity versus despair – suggesting the nature of a successful or unsuccessful resolution of the crisis at each stage (Pervin & John, 2001:102). For adolescents, the challenge is “identity verses role confusion” - the ability to answer the question “Who am I?”, and Erikson suggests we are intrinsically motivated towards achieving a resolution (Kroger, 2000:146).

In order for adolescents to work through the process of developing an identity, they may experiment with different identities in different social situations. They may maintain one identity at home and a different type of persona when they are with their peers. Eventually, most adolescents integrate the different possibilities into a single self-concept and a comfortable sense of identity (Rageliené, 2016:102).

According to Rubin, Bukowski, and Parker (2006:572) a big part of what the adolescent is learning is social identity, the part of the self-concept that is derived from one's group memberships. Adolescents define their social identities according to how similar they are to and differ from others, finding meaning in the sports, religious, school, gender, and ethnic categories they belong to. According to Rageliené (2016:104) adolescents' identity development is positively related with their relationships with peers. Belonging to a peer group and having positive peer relationships relate positively to adolescent identity development. Being a part of a peer group and good, positive communication with peers may provide appropriate social context for adolescent's identity development.

3.3 THE PEER GROUP

In the following section the peer group will be discussed, specifically focusing on defining the peer group, different types of peer groups, functions of the peer group as well as factors that influence peer group formation.

3.3.1 Definition of the peer group

According to Brown, Clasen and Eicher (1986:522), peer groups can be considered as the individual's immediate circle of good friends. Various researchers also state that other factors such as status, reputation, prominent activities or personality traits play a significant role in defining peer groups (Hartup, 1983:144).

Seifert and Hoffnung (1987:696) consider peer groups as consisting of adolescents of the same age, maturity, and background. This peer group serves as a motivator for adolescents to be more self-assured, extroverted, and brave. According to Dunphy (1972:16), peer groups are also formed during early and middle adolescence in order for adolescents to socialise and organise in heterosexual groups.

3.3.2 Types of peer groups

Brown (1989:189-210) grouped adolescent peer group interaction into three categories, which are listed as follows:

3.3.2.1 Pairs

Pairs, which are groups of two friends can influence each other in a direct and/or individual manner (Brown, 1989:210). Brown, however, does not consider this category as a peer group.

3.3.2.2 Cliques

Cliques are interaction-based peer groups that consist of only a few adolescents (Brown, 1989:190). Cliques differ in size but usually consist of five to ten adolescents who consider the clique as their primary base of social interaction. A clique can be seen as an adolescent's close group of friends.

3.3.2.3 Big groups/crowds

This category relates to peer groups that are based on reputation. The group consists of individuals who are stereotyped or labelled on the same characteristics as other individuals and are then classified as belonging to that specific group (Brown, 1989:190). Clasen and Brown (1987:21) considered the following groups based on characteristics of group members: "jocks", "brains", "druggies", "populars", "regulars", "dirtballs", "loners", "unsociables" and "nerds". Group norms are forced on the groups from the outside and relate to stereotypes characterised by individuals who belong to the group. Seifert and Hoffnung (1987:697) consider crowds/big groups (15 to 30 members) as the informal association of two to four cliques.

3.3.3 Functions of a peer group

The various functions of a peer group can be identified as follows:

3.3.3.1 Social interactions and communication

Berndt (1982:1447) maintains that adolescents learn about social interaction, role interpretation and communication skills within the peer group since the peer group acts as an agent for socialisation (Hartup, 1989:124). The adolescents also gain leadership skills and learn how to accurately evaluate themselves and others (Seifert & Hoffnung, 1987:590).

3.3.3.2 Security, confidence, and support

The peer group provides the adolescent with security and support (Seifert & Hoffnung, 1987:588; Winiarski-Jones, 1988:51) and Clasen and Brown (1985:452) go on to comment that the security and support forms a comforting contrast to the adolescents' insecurities about themselves. Clasen and Brown (1987:21), Seifert and Hoffnung (1987:590) and Fine (1981:34) all confirm that the peer group is a safe sanctuary where social skills and ideas can be practised.

The group allows the adolescent to gain a certain degree of independence from their family but at the same time provides for their need for emotional support (Hopkins, 1994:330).

3.3.3.3 Social skills and roles

The group provides the adolescent with opportunities to experiment with social roles of alternative identities as well as male and female roles in heterosexual relationships (Monteith *et al.*, 1988:105).

3.3.3.4 Development of self-concept

Adolescents' experiences with their specific peer groups contribute to the development of self-concept. According to Brennan (1985:464), the degree to which the adolescent takes part in the peer group, its activities and experiences is positively correlated with his/her self-concept. Research conducted by Bester and Fourie (2006:167) indicates that adolescents with a high self-concept experience less peer pressure.

3.3.3.5 Social acceptance and credibility

According to Winiarski-Jones (1988:54) and Monteith *et al.* (1988:12), the peer group provides the adolescent with social acceptance and credibility, while Walker (1995:46) adds that the peer group confirms that the adolescent is part of a social unit within society.

3.3.3.6 Creative and critical thinking

According to Damon and Phelps (1998, as cited in Schuld, 1999:12), the peer group contributes to the development of creativity and critical thinking. Peer assessment and peer review are processes whereby learners mark and give feedback on each other's work. Boase-Jelinek *et al.* (2013:119), found that the adolescents whose work is reviewed may benefit from getting external perspectives on ways in which their work may be improved, thus stimulating their creative and critical thinking. The adolescents doing the review also benefit as a result of having to process and analyse the work of a peer.

3.3.3.7 Social status and popularity

Brown, Eicher and Petrie (1986, as cited in Schuld, 1999:13) stated that the peer group determines the level of popularity and social status of the members based on where the group fits into the hierarchy of social status within the school or society.

3.3.3.8 Competition

The peer group provides the adolescent with the opportunity to compete with people of his/her own age and to acquire a place in a social group based on their abilities (Schuld, 1999:13).

3.3.3.9 Social mobility

The social mobility of the group serves as a benchmark against which the adolescent can measure his/her and others' actions, attitude and emotions (Seifert & Hoffnung, 1987:587). According to Brown (1989:195), the adolescent can evaluate themselves against different backgrounds, behavioural patterns, values, and norms by being part of a group.

3.3.3.10 Emancipation

Monteith *et al.* (1988:13), state that the group forces the adolescent to make independent choices without engaging with adults.

3.3.4 Factors that influence the formation of different peer groups

According to Clasen and Brown (1985) as well as Seifert and Hoffnung (1987), there are several factors that influence the formation of different peer groups and include aspects such as socio-economic status, values and value systems, age and gender.

3.3.4.1 Socio-economic status

According to Clasen and Brown's (1985:462) earlier research, peer groups are not socio-economically homogenous, although later research by Brown (1982:124) indicated that groups are formed according to social castes. Brown (1982:124-125) found that the "populars" and "jocks" are formed by adolescents from higher socio-economic backgrounds, while adolescents in the "normals", "brains", "nerds" and "loners" are from more diverse socio-economic backgrounds.

3.3.4.2 Values and value systems

The value system of a community can influence the type of groups that form as well as the values within the various groups (Schuld, 1999:14). Adolescents tend to associate with peer groups whose norms are consistent with their own values and interests (Robinson, 2014:145). She elaborates that although parents and the greater community are the source of basic moral values, these values are often, temporarily displaced by the morality and loyalties of the peer group.

3.3.4.3 Age

A study conducted by Gavin and Furman (1989:827) has shown that stable same-gender peer groups begin to emerge in pre-adolescence. During middle adolescence peer groups become more heterosexual.

In heterosexual peer groups boys tend to be older than the girls with whom they associate, notably the difference between the mean ages of boys and girls in the

same peer group ranged from three months to one year and ten months but averaged ten months (Dunphy, 1963:234).

3.3.4.4 Gender

According to Seifert and Hoffnung (1987:470), male peer groups consist of at least twelve members and are very active and competitive, whereas female peer groups mainly consist of pairs or small groups. Mjaavatn *et al.* (2016:46) states that female friendships are conducted “face to face” focusing emotional self-disclosure, while male friendships are conducted “side by side”, focusing activities centred around common interests.

3.4 PEER PRESSURE

In the following section peer pressure will be discussed, specifically focusing on defining peer pressure, peer pressure mechanisms, and typical behaviour related to positive and negative peer pressure.

3.4.1 Description of peer pressure

The term “peer pressure” refers to the influence that peers may have on each other. Although peer pressure does not necessarily have to be negative, the term “pressure” implies that the process influences individuals to do things that they may be resistant to or might not otherwise choose to do (Kiuru *et al.*, 2008:27).

During their adolescent years, individuals begin to spend more time in peer groups (Brown, 1990) and it is through this interaction with their peers that adolescents acquire a wide range of skills, attitudes, and experiences (Kiuru *et al.*, 2008:26). Previous research carried out on adolescent peer groups suggests that peer interactions take place at multiple levels (Brown, 1990:188; Kiuru *et al.*, 2008:26-27) while Brown (1990:189) specifically described peer interactions as operating on three levels, namely dyads, cliques, and crowds.

Gender differences have also been found in peer group composition. For example, girls’ peer groups are typically more intimate and tightly connected than those of boys (Kiuru *et al.*, 2008:27).

Research findings have shown that the members of adolescent peer groups resemble each other in many aspects such as age, gender, race, academic achievement and motivation, internalising distress and various external behaviours (Kiuru *et al.*, 2008:27).

According to Sussman *et al.* (2007:1603) peer group selection, also termed selective association, refers to the tendency of individuals to seek the company of like-minded peer groups. Subsequently, peer group influence, known as reciprocal socialisation, refers to the tendency of group members to shape and reinforce each other's shared attributes and behaviours over time. Peer influence is more commonly known as peer pressure and can be identified as is multi-dimensional since adolescents experience pressure in terms of various dimensions of involvement that include peer group involvement, school involvement, family involvement, and conformity to peer group norms.

3.4.2 Peer pressure mechanisms

The most prominent contributions of peer pressure research in the past decade were aimed at clarifying how or why adolescents conform to their peers (Brechwald & Prinstein, 2011:169). Since it is difficult to prevent adolescents from associating with their peers who may exert negative influences, the study of peer pressure mechanisms is critical for preventative efforts. By understanding why adolescents conform to peers, it could be possible to develop preventative measures to address the incentives that currently lead to negative conformity.

Some theoretical perspectives have guided recent research on the mechanisms of adolescent peer pressure. These theoretical perspectives are discussed below.

Developmental theories indicate increases in:

- the frequency of peer interactions during adolescence (Brown, 1990:171);
- the development of more sophisticated interpersonal behaviours, new social roles and experiences (Brown, 1990: 171);
- adolescents' motivation to develop an established sense of identity (Harter *et al.*, 1996:291; Brechwald & Prinstein, 2011:169); and

- adolescents' reliance on peer feedback and their perceived peer status as a source of identity and self-evaluation, a process known as "reflected appraisal" (Brechwald & Prinstein, 2011:169).

The assumption that adolescents are familiar with and motivated by positive regard and belonging in peer groups provides a basis for two complementary theoretical models that help to explain peer socialisation effects. Firstly, social learning theories propose that within a social context, individuals embrace new behaviours through modelling, social reward and punishment, and mediated reinforcement, through observational learning of valued peers (Pervin & John, 2001:285, 292, 381). Adolescents who observe popular students drinking alcohol will be motivated to conform to these behaviours in order to gain a similar status among their peers, particularly if adolescents experience extrinsic social reinforcement for doing so (Pervin & John, 2001:381).

Secondly, identity-based theories suggest that the imitation of valued or idealised peers' behaviour and adherence to apparent social norms within a valued group will confer a favourable sense of self. The adoption of a favourable sense of self is intrinsically rewarding, as the individual will have more confidence, trust in their skills, knowledge and ideas, use mistakes as a learning experience and focus on bigger goals (Brechwald & Prinstein, 2011:169).

In summary, theories suggest that adolescents invest progressively more in peers as primary sources of social and emotional support while using feedback and acceptance from their peers as a foundation for a sense of self-concept (Pervin & John, 2001:285-381). Brechwald and Prinstein (2011:169), suggest that by conforming to their peers' behaviour, adolescents participate in behaviours that:

- are related to high peer status;
- mimic the social norms of a valued peer group;
- lead to extrinsic behavioural reinforcement within social context; and
- contribute to an intrinsically rewarding sense of self-identity.

Advances in research on peer pressure have allowed for some preliminary examination of the following aspects, these being:

3.4.2.1 Adolescents engage in high status behaviour

Cillessen and Rose (2005, as cited in Brechwald & Prinstein, 2011:169) suggest that peer pressure seems to be linked to behaviours associated with high status peers within the group. While defining high status peers, Brechwald and Prinstein (2011:169) conceptualised status as based on dominant reputation within the positions of social hierarchy, and as having access to resources. Investigators such as Prinstein *et al.*, 2003; Mayeux *et al.*, 2008; Rancourt and Prinstein, 2010, (as cited in Brechwald & Prinstein, 2011:169). discovered that many of the behaviours relevant to peer influence, such as aggressive and health-risk behaviours, are associated with high status popularity among peers. Both aggressive behaviours and several health-risk behaviours in adolescents can be linked to their association with and exposure to the behavioural norms of other adolescents that are perceived as popular within the peer group (Brechwald & Prinstein, 2011:170). Research findings have revealed that adolescents are more likely to participate in risky or aggressive behaviours and approve of deviant attitudes if they believe that doing so has been endorsed by peers of perceived high status (Cohen & Prinstein, 2006:968). If adolescents believe that these same deviant attitudes are endorsed by low-status peers, adolescents would demonstrate a sort of rebellious behaviour by adopting opposing attitudes (Cohen & Prinstein, 2006:968-969).

3.4.2.2 Adolescents engage in behaviour that match the social norms of a valued group

Although some evidence suggests that adolescents may be influenced by behaviours linked to high status in the peer context as mentioned above, not all adolescents may place value on popular peers or yearn for identification with high status individuals. In fact, some adolescents may be influenced by behaviours that are associated with the social norms of peers who form part of a larger peer group (Cohen & Prinstein, 2006:969). For example, some research findings have stated that adolescents who have been rejected by peers and possess a history of aggressive or deviant behaviour may be likely to associate with deviant peer groups who reject the behavioural norms of the overall peer context (Brechwald & Prinstein, 2011:170). Additionally, several empirical studies have suggested stronger associations between adolescents' behaviour and their perception of their peers'

behavioural norms compared to the peers' actual behaviour (Brechwald & Prinstein, 2011:170).

3.4.2.3 Adolescents engage in behaviour that is reinforced by their peers

If conforming behaviour (behaviour that is in accordance with the group norm) is followed by positive reinforcement, the probability that the behaviour will reoccur is increased. Reinforcement is an important factor in shaping (forming and altering) social behaviour through positive-affective behaviours such as smiling and laughing (Endler, 1965:147). Similarly, Brechwald and Prinstein (2011:170) stated that research relating to peer pressure focused on deviancy training, an interactional process characterised by recurrent peer reinforcement of anti-social behaviour and attitudes. A large percentage of research in the last decade has continued to examine deviancy training as a key mechanism for anti-social or deviant behaviour across gender and development and has suggested that it occurs less frequently in female adolescents than among male adolescent dyads (Brechwald & Prinstein, 2011:170). Several studies from the maturing Oregon Youth Study (Capaldi & Patterson, 1989, as cited in Dishion *et al.*, 2004:654) have detected predictive effects of deviancy training in early adolescence in terms of problematic behaviour in late adolescence and young adulthood, suggesting that the effects of deviancy training in adolescence persist beyond this developmental period.

3.4.3 Typical behaviour related to negative peer pressure

The majority of research examining peer influence effects focus on the socialisation of anti-social, deviant and health-risk behaviours. Continuing research in these behavioural domains has highlighted the role of peers in alcohol use, smoking, and aggressive and/or illegal behaviours (Brechwald & Prinstein, 2011:166), an emphasis that is understandable, given the physical and mental health implications of these behaviours for adolescents.

Peer pressure strongly affects behaviour in children and adolescents, influencing them to say the “right” thing, to wear the “right” clothes, or to coerce them into negative behaviours such as using illicit drugs, drinking, cheating on a test (Brown, 1990:173).

Peer pressure may also be used to coerce adolescents to join gangs whose behaviour utilises peer pressure to promote negative behaviours such as theft, the destruction of property, or the injury of another person. Research has indicated that over the last 50 years, adult influence has been replaced by peer influence/pressure as the main source of values and behavioural norms in adolescents. Consequently, this new trend has brought along with it, a rise in anti-social behaviour (Oni, 2010:188).

Affiliation with deviant peers predicts delinquent behaviour more strongly than community, school, or family characteristics (Oni, 2010:18-19). Current research by Snell and Hirschstein (2005:378-379) warns that adolescents, aged between 13 and 15, are more likely to drink or smoke if they have friends that do so. This is only one of many studies that give credence to the notion that adolescents can be influenced by the peers around them.

3.4.3.1 Smoking

Savin-Williams and Berndt (1990:283) found that adolescents never experienced direct or normative pressure to smoke. Those who do smoke were, however, not discouraged by their peer group. Newman (1984 as cited in Schuld, 1999:56) found that for most adolescents, smoking is the easiest way to appear independent and mature, enabling them to receive recognition and enjoy themselves. With regard to gender, Brown (1982:125) found that girls experience more pressure from their peers to smoke than boys. Research conducted by Chassin *et al.* (1986, as cited in Schuld, 1999:57) and Webster *et al.* (1994:647), indicated that peer pressure is a meaningful predictor in the increase of adolescent smoking. Nevertheless, Michell and West (1996:48) later found that adolescents deny that peer pressure has an influence on smoking.

3.4.3.2 Alcohol use and abuse

Brown (1990:190) found that peer pressure plays a very important role in alcohol abuse while Downs and Rose' (1991:476) later research findings support these claims. Subsequent research by Schuld (1999:58) states that peer pressure, regarding the use of alcohol, is subtle and indirect. A study conducted by Dielman

et al. (1993:306) showed that susceptibility to peer pressure and the exposure to peer pressure relating to alcohol use and abuse are closely linked.

Peer pressure in terms of alcohol use seems to transition from positive pressure (against alcohol use) among Grade 7 adolescents to severe negative pressure (in favour of alcohol use) among Grade 12 adolescents (Clasen & Brown, 1985:454). Further research by Clasen and Brown (1985:454) indicates that adolescents in Grade 7 to 9 view alcohol use as serious misconduct, whereas adolescents in Grade 10 to 12 view alcohol use as social involvement. Schuld (1999:58) argues that peer pressure to use alcohol increases from Grade 9 and 10, reaches its peak in Grade 11, and reduces in Grade 12 while Downs and Rose (1991:469) found that girls are more susceptible to peer pressure relating to alcohol use and abuse.

3.4.3.3 Drugs

Research by Jessor (1987, as cited in Schuld, 1999:58) argues that peer pressure has a significant impact on the adolescent's use of drugs. This has been confirmed by later research conducted by Schuld (1999:58) and Vargas (2011:312).

In a study conducted by Vargas (2011:312), it was found that good friends influence the adolescent in terms of initial drug use, but that the best friend will influence the continuous use thereof. Reid (1989:140) found that the peer group transferred their disposition towards the use of drugs to the individual members of the group. The possibility of getting involved with drug users is reduced in cases where the adolescent has a good relationship with his parents, as well as close friends who disapprove of drug use. Adolescents who use drugs in all probability have friends who are also users. In such cases, mutual approval is found for their conduct and mutual pressure can be exercised to proceed with the abuse in question (Fourie, 2001:54).

Brown (1982:21) found that peer pressure to use drugs was one of the lowest forms of peer pressure with Sheppard *et al.* (1985, as cited in Schuld, 1999:59) later stating that the responsibility for drug use lies only with the individual who uses it. Vargas' (2011:322) research findings showed that adolescents started to use drugs because the peer group expected them to do so.

In terms of gender, research conducted by Downs (1985, as cited in Vargas, 2011:322) indicates that girls are more easily influenced by their peers to use drugs than boys. However, this finding is contradicted by Chassin *et al.* (1986, as cited in Vargas, 2011:323), who did not find any gender differences in their research.

3.4.3.4 Delinquent behaviour and crime

Although Clasen and Brown (1987:22) indicated that the "dirtballs" peer group experience pressure to display delinquent behaviour, Brown *et al.* (1986:529) and Clasen and Brown (1985:464) found delinquent behaviour was one of the areas in which peer pressure was experienced the least.

Schuld (1999:59) established that, in order to fulfil his/her need to be accepted by and receive approval from his peer groups, the adolescent will get involved in delinquent behaviour. Earlier research by Raniseski and Sigelman (1992, as cited in Vargas, 2011:311) found that observed peer pressure positively correlates with delinquent behaviour. Although peer influence relating to delinquent behaviour increases slowly from early adolescence and reaches its peak in Grade 9, it slowly starts to decrease after this (Berndt, 1979, as cited in Schuld, 1999:59).

Some boys will get involved in delinquent behaviour and crime if they are part of a peer group who commits crime (Keenan *et al.*, 1995:725). Simons *et al.* (1991, as cited in Taylor & Wong, 1996:23) found a correlation between delinquent behaviour within the peer group and crime. According to (Seifert & Hoffnung, 1987:603), the peer group is one of the factors that is associated with crime during adolescence, a statement confirmed by later research in a study by Schuld (1999:59).

3.4.3.5 Poor Academic performance

Berndt *et al.* (1989:60) argues that parents have a greater influence on adolescents' academic performance than their peers and that the peer group's influence on in this regard is subtler and, therefore, not obvious. Although less influential, Ide *et al.* (1981:483) found that the peer group can influence the adolescent's academic performance in either a positive or negative manner. Fourie (2001:188) further found that a significant, low negative correlation exists between peer pressure and academic performance. In other words, the higher the peer pressure, the lower the

academic performance. He mentions that adolescents who are academically stronger have more successful peer relationships and are readily accepted more by the peer group. Consequently, they experience less peer pressure to gain acceptance.

3.4.4 Typical behaviour related to positive peer pressure

Peer pressure could have various positive outcomes relevant to academic motivation and achievement, extra-curricular participation and general behaviour (Poteat, 2007 and Poteat, Espelage & Green, 2007, as cited in Brechwald & Prinstein, 2011:166). It appears that the range of peer influence processes is broad, and the implications of the behaviour formation and change motivated by peers during the adolescent years are quite extensive. The last decade has produced research, which suggests that peer influence effects are relevant to the development of healthy behaviours such as pro-social behaviour (Brechwald & Prinstein, 2011:166).

Snell and Hirschstein (2005:378-379) point out that adolescents can often influence each other in very positive ways, such as pressuring friends to stay in school, performing well academically, or joining a sports team. Friends may encourage each other to participate in peer tutoring or to work out conflicts appropriately with other students in peer mediation. Not only is this type of positive pressure enriching for adolescents, it also helps to develop social skills, and it can aid in a sense of self-worth and self-exploration for them.

Parents, teachers and psychologists use positive peer pressure as a method to change an adolescent's behaviour in school. Teachers may orchestrate peer pressure to get adolescents to exhibit appropriate behaviours or to follow class rules.

The peer group has been identified as a major influence in boys' lives and studies have documented its impact on their learning and social relationships at school (Lingard, Martino & Mills 2008:150). Based on the above statement, it is evident that boys experience positive peer pressure, especially when it comes to academic work and socialising. The question, however, arises whether positive peer pressure

experienced would be more prominent in boys in a single-gender school than boys in a co-educational school.

3.4.4.1 Academic performance

As previously postulated, adolescents may experience peer pressure as a positive force in their lives. This may potentially have a subsequent and positive influence on their academic performance, school involvement and serve as a support system (Schuld, 1999:1).

Peer relationships or friendships could improve school performance in several ways. One possibility is that the presence of positive peer relationships could enhance the overall atmosphere of the school and, therefore, encourage more school involvement and higher levels of academic achievement (Spavin, 2007:28). Adolescents who experience higher levels of validation from their peers may receive positive feedback in terms of class participation and school success and thus attain greater academic achievement as a result. Friendships within the peer group, which provide help, guidance, and communication, may support adolescents in their efforts to excel at homework and classwork. Higher levels of trust in friendships could lead adolescents to attend school more and be less afraid to participate in class. Peer groups with lower levels of conflict and alienation would serve as less of a distraction from academics than peer groups with high levels of conflict (Spavin, 2007:28).

Brown *et al.* (1986:529) found that the peer group would rather influence the adolescent to perform better academically than to do badly, while later in later research it was found that adolescents with close friends who perform well academically, are more inclined to improve their academic performance (Schuld, 1999:60). Interestingly, Ryan and Kuczkowski (1994:221) established that peers influenced adolescents' academic achievement and intrinsic motivation for school, but not their expected success in school or their beliefs about the importance of school.

According to Kusz (2009:15), the pressure that adolescents experience from their peers to achieve academically can cause stress, as there is an increase in competition for good marks and fear of failure. Situations such as answering and

asking questions in class, and speaking in front of peers can often lead to the adolescents experiencing stress.

3.4.4.2 Extra-curricular participation

The link between peer status or reputation and the participation in certain extra-curricular activities may be something that adolescents regularly consider in their decisions regarding participation in certain activities (Brown, 2013:80).

Brown (2013:80) suggests that gaining popularity or visibility within the peer group could be the motivating factor for adolescents to pursue certain extra-curricular activities while Bohnert *et al.* (2013, as cited in Brown, 2013:80) further reported that continuous involvement in extra-curricular activities, especially sport increased the number of nominations an adolescent would receive as a close friend to other members of the peer group.

Since peer status is an important dimension of extra-curricular activities, adolescents may attribute a certain set of behaviours or traits to members of a given activity; for example, the nerdy/geeky chess player or the unintelligent rugby player (Brown, 2013:81).

Thorough research has not been done in terms of the accuracy of peer influence on extra-curricular activities and why adolescents choose to participate in certain extra-curricular activities. However, Brown (1982:126) found that if a school focuses strongly on rugby or athletic performance, participation in these activities is a factor that determines the status and membership of adolescents in the peer group. Therefore, adolescents would more likely participate in these activities as it will ensure that they get approval from the group.

When considering how extra-curricular participation impacts adolescents' social status within the peer group, mention should be made of the potentially negative impact of participation in extra-curricular activities (Wilson, 2009:16). Research by Wilson (2009:16) determined that parents and teachers fear that adolescents who participate in extra-curricular activities may lose their academic focus when they become too busy since certain activities are very time-consuming. Additionally, participation in extra-curricular activities may not only impact academics but can

also affect the adolescents both emotionally and physically, which could lead to stress, fatigue and burn-out (Wilson, 2009:17).

3.4.4.3 Pro-social behaviour

Pro-social behaviour refers to all social behaviour skills in peer group relationships that relate to knowledge of interpersonal relationships. Examples of such skills include solving cognitive tasks, being helpful, sensitive and co-operative (Schuld, 1999:21). Altruism, complimenting, positive contact, people-centred attitudes and sharing with others are yet more examples of this behaviour (Brechwald & Prinstein, 2011:173).

Pro-social behaviour is characterised by a concern for the rights, feelings, and welfare of other people. Behaviours that can be described as pro-social include feeling empathy and concern for others and behaving in ways to help or benefit other people (Batson, 1995:333).

Research by Ellis and Zarbatany (2007, as cited in Brechwald & Prinstein, 2011:173) established that peer groups with greater centrality within the larger peer network were more potent sources of influence for pro-social behaviour while some research findings do suggest that peer influence effects are relevant to the development of healthy behaviours such as pro-social behaviour (Brechwald & Prinstein, 2011:167). Peer socialisation processes also may provide potential protection from maladaptive outcomes and in so doing, rather promote pro-social behaviour (Prinstein *et al.*, 2001, cited in Brechwald & Prinstein, 2011:167).

3.4.4.4 Family relationships

Adolescence is a time where adolescents become increasingly autonomous and take on more adult roles. This is also a period in which they develop their own ideas and start mapping their own lives. They begin to spend more time with their peer group than they had up to this point, and also value them more. Consequently, it may appear as if they are starting to cut ties with parents and rejecting their ideals when in fact, rather than cutting ties, adolescents are merely re-negotiating the parent-child relationship and adjusting the relationship to incorporate their increasing independence and maturity (De Guzman, 2007:31).

Despite fears parents may have about their adolescents rejecting their values and beliefs, research conducted by De Guzman (2007:31-33) has shown that parents continue to be of significant influence. Furthermore, adolescents have reported that they would rather have political, religious, and general beliefs similar to their parents, rather than their peers (De Guzman: 2007:31).

Fourie (2001:199) and Bester and Fourie (2006:163) found that there is a negative correlation between peer pressure and parent-child relationships, which implies that the weaker the parent-child relationship, the higher the peer pressure will be that the adolescent will experience.

One can conclude from the literature that peer pressure can indeed be positive, as adolescents experience pressure from their peers to perform academically, participate in extra-curricular activities and to display pro-social behaviour. Unfortunately, positive peer pressure can have a negative consequence for adolescents in that it may cause stress.

3.5 FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE TYPICAL PEER PRESSURE

In the following section the factors that influence typical peer pressure will be discussed. These factors include gender, age, cognitive functioning, and academic performance, self-concept, and parent-child relationships.

3.5.1 Gender

Several research studies have been conducted that focus on the gender differences in adolescent social activities (Berndt & Ladd, 1989; Brown *et al.*, 1986; Taylor & Wong, 1996; Steinberg & Monahan, 2007).

Taylor and Wong (1996:13) established that the gender differences in peer pressure may be related to social and behavioural pressures to conform to gender norm roles. For example, girls who perceive their peers to value having intimate relationships with boys, going to parties and other behaviours linked to popularity, show higher intrinsic motivation to be in heterosexual relationships. Conversely, the intrinsic motivation of boys is not impacted by the extent to which their peers value the above-mentioned behaviours.

Research conducted by Brown *et al.* (1986:528) and Berndt and Ladd (1989:25) suggests that boys are more willing to conform to anti-social behaviour than girls. Taylor and Wong (1996:8) found that there are gender differences in peer influence. Boys tend to be influenced more by peers who exhibit negative or deviant behaviour. Fourie (2001:183) later found that boys experience more peer pressure than girls and that since peer group acceptance is very important to adolescent boys, they tend to conform more to peer pressure in order to ensure acceptance from the group.

Research by Schuld (1999:140-141) found that there are definite gender differences in peer pressure related to school grades. Whereas boys experience stronger peer pressure regarding peer group involvement (in Grade 11), family involvement (in Grade 11), school involvement (in Grade 8 and 12) and deviant behaviour (in Grade 8 and 11), girls only experience stronger peer pressure relating to deviant behaviour in Grade 10. It was also found that boys and girls in Grade 9 experience peer pressure equally.

3.5.2 Age

In Steinberg and Monahan's (2007:1541) investigation of the age-peer pressure relationship, they concluded that peer influence decreases between the ages of 14 and 18. Similarly, Fourie (2001:187-186) and Bester and Fourie (2006:167) found that Grade 8 adolescents experience more peer pressure than adolescents in Grade 10 to 12.

Results of a study conducted by Wall *et al.* (1993:412) indicated that adolescents' experience of anti-social peer pressure is significantly higher during early adolescence and gradually decreases as the adolescent becomes older. Schuld (1999:140) established that Grade 9 and Grade 10 adolescents experienced the most peer pressure in various fields such as pressure for peer group involvement, conformity, school involvement, and anti-social behaviour. While earlier research by Clasen and Brown (1985:453) found that adolescents' experience of peer pressure, specifically related to anti-social behaviour, increases during early adolescence and decreases during later adolescence when adolescents reach emotional autonomy.

This has been confirmed in the research of Steinberg and Silverberg (1986:848) and O'Brien and Bierman (1988:1360).

It is evident from the literature that adolescents experience more peer pressure during early adolescence and that it decreases as the adolescents get older.

3.5.3 Cognitive functioning and academic performance

According to Fourie (2001:76), adolescents who are in the formal operational stage of cognitive development usually perform well academically and are also the more popular, respected members of the peer group. Fourie (2001:76) stated that it is very likely that these adolescents who perform well academically will have a high status in the peer group and in such a capacity could influence peer pressure in the group.

In a study conducted by Spavin (2007:26), it was found that adolescent friendships were predictive of changes in levels of academic achievement over time. These findings indicate that adolescent friendships may be an important factor that contributes to academic achievement. Spavin (2007:28) found that adolescent friendships at the age of 13 had no relation to their academic performance but that at the age of 17 adolescents possessing intimate friendships with close peers demonstrated an improvement in their academic achievement.

Leka (2015:129) found that adolescents select a social context that exposes them to a particular set of values, behaviours, and opportunities by choosing to associate with certain peers. Whether or not adolescents select friends with similar academic goals, they do become more similar over time. Adolescents' interactions with their peers can positively influence overall academic development, knowledge acquisition, analytical, and problem-solving skills.

Sigelman and Rider (2006, as in Van der Westhuizen, 2008:36) indicated that adolescents who are accepted by their peers are more likely to occupy leadership positions within the peer group and excel academically, while learners rejected by their peers struggle more academically or even leave school.

From the literature it can be concluded that there is a strong link between peer pressure and low academic achievement as adolescents who do not perform well academically are more likely to conform to peer pressure. On the other hand, adolescents who perform well academically are less likely to conform to peer pressure.

3.5.4 Self-concept

Research done by Connor (1994:208) established that adolescents with a high self-concept are less likely to conform to peer pressure since acceptance within a peer group gives the adolescent status as a person and, therefore, increases their self-concept. Such adolescents are thus more likely to succumb to peer pressure (Connor, 1994:214).

Cullingford and Morrison (1997:66-69) found that adolescents with a low self-concept are often rejected by the peer group, which encourages them to conform to peer pressure in order to win the favour of the peer group and to be accepted. Schuld (1999:141) found that adolescents who are impulsive, anxious, careful, aggressive and have a low self-concept, are easily susceptible to peer pressure, while later research by Fourie (2001:212) indicated a negative relation between self-concept and peer pressure. In other words, the lower the self-concept, the higher the peer pressure that the adolescent will experience since adolescents with a high self-concept do not rely on the approval or acceptance of their peers and, therefore, experience less peer pressure.

It can be concluded from the literature that there is a relationship between self-concept and peer pressure. Adolescents who have a high self-concept experience less peer pressure than adolescents who have a low self-concept.

3.5.5 Parent-Child relationship

The literature suggests that the quality of the adolescents' peer group relationship could be determined by the style of interaction they have learnt from interactions with their parents. Conger and Galambos (1997:123) established that adolescents who have a good relationship with their parents are less likely to conform to peer pressure, a fact later confirmed by Fourie (2001:212) who found that high peer pressure can be associated with poor parent-child relationships. Research

conducted by Fuligni and Eccles (1993:628) indicates that the nature of parent-child relationships during early adolescence relates to the adolescents' relationships with their peers. If the adolescents have a poor relationship with their parents, they are more likely to conform to peer pressure in order for them to be accepted by the peer group.

More recently, Geary (2011:36) found that high parental control of issues such as the adolescents' choice of friends or dating partners and issues of deviance, such as problem behaviours, or drug use, is associated with adolescents experiencing more peer pressure. In families where the parenting style is either indulgent or disciplinarian, adolescents experience higher peer pressure. However, situations in which the parents employ an authoritative parenting style in which both parents and adolescents negotiated family decisions, adolescents experience less peer pressure. These findings suggest that it is possible to predict adolescents' experience of peer pressure in late adolescence from earlier parent-child relationships.

3.5.5.1 Behaviour functioning

In order to explore parents' potential contribution to the development of social behaviour and status within the peer group, the following areas will be highlighted:

3.5.5.1.1 Parenting styles

Parenting behaviour can be classified in a two-dimensional framework of social control and social support (Schuld, 1999:41). Baumrind (1983, as cited in Maccoby & Martin, 1983:54) indicated two more dimensions, namely psychological autonomy, and parent-child-communication.

Baumrind (1991:127) suggested that the majority of parents display one of three different parenting styles, namely authoritarian, authoritative, and indulgent. Further research by Maccoby and Martin (1983:54) also suggested the addition of a fourth parenting style, namely neglectful.

Parental warmth, inductive discipline, non-hostile punishment measures and consistency in parental style are associated with positive developmental outcomes

in adolescents (Maccoby & Martin, 1983:79). According to Lamborn *et al.* (1991, as cited in Schuld, 1999:41), an authoritative parenting style positively correlates to the adolescent's personal and social competence, improved school performance and reduced problem behaviour. Indulgent and authoritarian parenting styles are associated with anti-social behaviour and poor school performance (Seifert & Hoffnung, 1987:355).

3.5.5.1.2 Parental discipline techniques

Brody and Shaffer (1982:31) distinguish between three discipline techniques that can be associated with the adolescent's social behaviour:

- *Power assertion*: This technique purports physical strength, commands and withholding of privileges by the parents and is associated with high levels of aggression in the adolescent. The parents may possibly evoke aggression and anger and serve as aggressive models thus strengthening aggressive behaviour that will be presented by the adolescent in his peer group.
- *Withholding love*: The parents may isolate the adolescent from them and withhold affection, which could lead to the adolescent becoming anxious, having low self-worth and conforming more easily to his/her peer group.
- *Induction*: Parents explain and discuss the reasons for their actions or limitations to the adolescent. They also praise the adolescent. According to Wenar (1994, as cited in Schuld, 1999:20), this technique results in adolescents who are responsible, introspective, and who work well with others.

These disciplinary techniques are used by parents to discourage unacceptable thoughts, feelings, and actions and at the same time instil a set of moral standards and values with the adolescent.

3.5.5.1.3 Parent-child bonding

It appears as if the adolescent's attachment to their parents promote their social competence (Schuld, 1999:45) and that the quality of adolescents' attachment to

their parents forms the foundation for future relationships. Parents' warmth, involvement, as well as democratic and inductive reasoning, promote adolescents' social competence, and peer relationships. Parents with the above-mentioned characteristics assist the adolescent in that they:

- cultivate a feeling of security and self-confidence in their children;
- serve as models of appropriate behaviour;
- explicitly teaches appropriate behaviour; and
- use positive reinforcement and punishment effectively.

Research conducted by Rubin and Sloman (1984, as cited in Schuld, 1999:42) shows that parents influence their children through:

- safe family relationships that form the foundation for the exploration of the adolescent's social environment and a positive orientation with regard to social relationships,
- the coaching of social behaviour through examples, instructions, acceptance and rejection, and their way of social interaction and social relationships.

3.6 CONCLUSION

From the literature discussed in this chapter, the conclusion can be drawn that the phenomenon of peer groups, peer pressure and peer influence is very complex one. There are many gaps in the literature about peer pressure and social relationships in adolescence and most of the research found in the literature focus on negative peer pressure and peer pressure in the co-educational settings. Moreover, the research studies that include only boys tend to employ a "negative" approach to peer pressure with the result that there is a definite gap in the literature concerning positive peer pressure. Additionally, research related to positive peer pressure mainly focuses on academic performance and extra-curricular participation (Snell & Hirschstein, 2005:378-379; Lingard *et al.*, 2009:150; Brechwald & Prinstein, 2011:166).

The literature indicates that conformity to peer pressure is influenced by a number of factors such as age, gender, academic performance, and parent-child relationships.

One of the most important factors to consider in relation to current research is the gender differences in peer pressure and peer group dynamics. The literature reveals that boys are more willing to conform to anti-social behaviour than girls (Brown *et al.*, 1986:528), while girls may be more concerned than boys about their relations with others, which has been assumed to account in part for girls' greater vulnerability to depression (Steinberg & Monahan, 2007:11).

Based on the literature, there seems to be certain differences in how peer pressure is experienced by adolescents of both genders. However, there was no research found on the peer pressure that boys experience in the presence or absence of girls. Therefore, the question remains whether boys experience positive or negative peer pressure in the absence of girls.

Another important factor to be considered in the current research is the development of peer pressure. In the literature reviewed, it was evident that adolescents in Grade 8 and 9 experience more peer pressure than adolescents in Grade 10 to 12 and that it gradually decreases as the adolescents mature (Clasen & Brown 1985:453; Steinberg & Silverberg 1986: 848; O' Brein & Bierman 1988: 1360; Fourie 2001:187-186; Bester & Fourie 2006:167). There was, however, no evidence found that indicates that peer pressure would be similar or different for boys who attend single-gender schools compared to boys who attend co-educational schools.

Self-concept is another important factor to consider for the current research. In the literature it was evident that self-concept is related to peer pressure. It was found that a low self-concept related to adolescents experiencing more peer pressure due to the fact that they need validation and acceptance from the peer group. Adolescents with a high self-concept, however, are less likely to experience peer pressure since they are more satisfied with themselves, giving them a sense of security. Subsequently, they make less effort to meet the expectations of their peers. No evidence was found in the literature that indicated that self-concept as a

variable in peer pressure research, plays a significant role when it comes to the single-gender schooling scenario.

From the literature, it was noted that there is a connection between parent-child relationships and how adolescents experience peer pressure. While research by Fourie (2001:212) found that adolescents who have a poor relationship with their parents are more likely to experience peer pressure, no evidence was found in the literature that indicated that the relationship between parent-child relationships and peer pressure would be the same in a single-gender scenario.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH DESIGN AND DATA COLLECTION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the manner in which the empirical investigation was conducted will be described. The main purpose of the empirical investigation was to determine how boys experience peer pressure at a single-gender school (see section 1.3).

In order to achieve the aim of this study, hypotheses were stated with reference to a number of variables relating to adolescent peer pressure, such as motivation, stress, self-concept, and relationship with peers. These hypotheses and the rationales are provided in this chapter.

In the light of literature reviewed, Grade 8 and 9 adolescents experience more peer pressure than adolescents in Grades 10 to 12 and, therefore, the sample consisted of only Grade 8 and 9 learners. The sample was drawn from a single-gender and co-educational school in order to compare how boys experience peer pressure in the two types of schools. More information on the sample, as well as the manner in which the sampling took place, will be discussed in this chapter.

A central aspect in this investigation was the development of an instrument to measure how boys experience peer pressure as well as certain socio-affective factors that may have an influence on peer pressure. The researcher will explain the way in which the measuring instrument was developed as well as the reliability of the instrument.

The procedure that was followed during the empirical investigation, including aspects such as obtaining permission to conduct research at the schools and the process when the respondents completed the questionnaire, will be discussed.

4.2 HYPOTHESES

In the light of the literature study in Chapters 2 and 3 and the objective of the study set out in paragraph 1.3, it is possible to formulate a number of hypotheses which form the basis for the empirical research.

4.2.1 Hypothesis 1

There is a significant relationship between certain socio-affective variables and peer pressure (positive and negative peer pressure).

Rationale

From the literature it is evident that there are several socio-affective variables that relate to peer pressure), namely self-concept, stress, motivation, and relationship with peers (Fourie, 2001:213; Cohen & Prinstein, 2006:975; Prinstein, 2007:168; Kusz, 2009:15; Lebedina-Manzoni & Ricijaš, 2013:45).

Cullingford and Morrison (1997:66, 69) found that adolescents with a low self-concept are often rejected by the peer group, which encourages them to conform to peer pressure in an attempt to win the favour of the group and to be accepted. Research done by Schuld (1999:141) established that adolescents who are impulsive, anxious, aggressive and have a low self-concept, are easily susceptible to peer pressure, while Fourie (2001:212) later identified a negative correlation between self-concept and peer pressure. In other words, the lower the self-concept, the higher the peer pressure that the adolescent will experience. Fourie (2001:212) also found that self-concept was the most important factor relating to peer pressure, explaining 36% of the variance in peer pressure.

Later research by Kusz (2009:15) found that adolescent peer pressure experienced in terms of academic achievement might cause stress because of the increase in competition for good marks and the fear of failing a test or examination. Wilson (2009:16-17) further found that the positive peer pressure that peers exert on other adolescents might also cause stress when considering how extra-curricular participation impact adolescents' social status within the peer group. In addition, he stated that participation in extra-curricular activities might have a potentially negative influence on academic performance since participation in certain activities is very time-consuming, which decreases time spent on doing homework or studying.

The peer pressure that adolescents experience to perform well academically or to participate in extra-curricular activities is seen as positive peer pressure (Snell &

Hirschstein 2005:378-379; Brechwald & Prinstein, 2011:166). This can be seen in research conducted by Ryan (2001, as cited in Brechwald & Prinstein, 2011:174). The research found that the peer pressure adolescents experience to perform well academically also intrinsically motivates them to perform better at school. Vest and Simpkins (2012, as cited in Brown, 2013: 80) suggested that gaining popularity or visibility within the peer group are factors that motivate adolescents to pursue certain extra-curricular activities.

4.2.2 Hypothesis 2

There is a significant difference between the positive and negative peer pressure experienced by boys in a single-gender school.

Rationale

Fourie (2001:183) found that adolescent boys and girls do not experience peer pressure in the same way, probably because they do not place the same status on peer group acceptance. Boys generally experience more peer pressure than their female counterparts. Furthermore, Berndt and Ladd (1989:25) found that boys are more willing to conform to anti-social behaviour than girls are, with this being confirmed by the research conducted by Brown *et al.* (1986:528). Boys focus more on the peer group because acceptance is very important to them with the result that they tend to conform more to peer pressure to ensure that they are accepted within the group (Berndt, 1979; Brown *et al.*, 1986:528). Since boys and girls differ in terms of the peer pressure they experience, it is possible that boys, in the absence of girls may experience peer pressure differently than in cases where girls are present. There is no certainty whether the peer pressure experienced by boys in a single-gender school will be more positive or more negative.

4.2.3 Hypothesis 3

There is a significant difference in the peer pressure experienced by boys in a single-gender school and boys in a co-educational school (positive and negative peer pressure).

Rationale

The peer group has been identified as a major influence (negative and positive) in boys' lives and studies have documented its impact on their academic performance, behaviour (anti-social and pro-social), social relationships at school (such as peer relationships), extra-curricular participation and adolescent-teacher relationships (Smith, 1998; Martino, 2000; Jackson, 2002; Lingard, Martino & Mills 2009:150).

The literature provides no evidence confirming that peer pressure might be similar or different for boys who attend single-gender schools when compared to boys who attend co-educational schools. It is, however, suspected that the positive peer pressure experienced by boys in a single-gender school might be more evident than boys in a co-educational school. One of the major reasons for this assumption is related to the composition of single-gender boys' schools where classes are streamlined academically or according to subject choices. It would appear that adolescent boys place pressure on one another to perform better academically in order to be accepted by the peer group. Consequently, if a boy in an academically strong class does not perform according to the group standard, the group will not accept him.

Single-gender boys' schools also tend to employ a mass participation policy where participation in extra-curricular activities is compulsory. According to research from the International Boys School Coalition (AISD, 2011:9-10), single-gender schools for boys can provide a stimulating and safe learning environment that encourages full participation by boys in all activities. This type of mass participation produces a sense of competition among them, which, in turn, encourages them to influence one another to participate and do their best. This can, therefore, be interpreted as positive peer pressure.

4.2.4 Hypothesis 4

There are specific factors that differentiate best between boys who experience positive peer pressure and those who do not.

Rationale

The literature shows that peer pressure is influenced by a number of factors such as age, gender, self-concept, and parent-child relationships (Fourie, 2001:213; Cohen & Prinstein, 2006:975; Prinstein, 2007:168; Kusz, 2009:15; Lebedina-Manzoni & Ricijaš, 2013:45). Research by Fourie (2001:213) focusing mainly on negative peer pressure, found that self-concept, age, popularity, and relationship with peers accounted for 46% of the variance in peer pressure and could, therefore, be regarded as the most important variables associated with peer pressure. Concurrently, he also established that self-concept was the most important factor that relates to peer pressure, explaining 36% of the variance in peer pressure

In the literature (Snell & Hirschstein 2005:378-379; Kusz, 2009:15; Wilson, 2009:17; Brechwald & Prinstein, 2011:166) it was found that other factors such as motivation, stress, and peer relationships might also influence peer pressure. It can be assumed, therefore, that motivation and stress, just like self-concept, age, popularity and relationship with peers, may contribute to the variance in peer pressure.

Due to the lack of research on positive peer pressure, it is not clear which factors relate to this type of pressure. The factors measured in the current investigation are motivation, stress, self-concept, and relationship with peers. The aim of the study is to determine which of these factors discriminate best between those boys who experience positive peer pressure and those who experience negative peer pressure.

4.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

The following research design was used to test the above-mentioned hypotheses. The design consists of the sample, the measuring instruments used, and the research procedure followed.

4.3.1 The sample

Sampling is the statistical process of selecting individuals from a particular population of interest for purposes of making observations and statistical inferences.

The obtained results can be then readily generalised to the population from which the sample was selected (Balnaves & Caputi, 2001:90).

According to the second objective of the study the difference in how boys in single-gender and co-educational schools experience peer pressure had to be investigated. Therefore, a sample had to be drawn from a single-gender school for boys as well as from a co-educational school for comparison purposes. The sampling method used, can be described as cluster sampling where the population was divided into subpopulations (clusters) on the basis of type of school (co-educational or single-gendered). Cluster sampling is a type of random sample that uses multiple stages in which aggregated units are randomly selected and then samples are drawn from the sampled aggregated units or clusters (Neuman, 2014:262).

During the first phase of sampling the school were divided into two clusters. For the first cluster, a list of all the single-gender schools for boys was drawn up and it was decided to involve schools in the Johannesburg area since there are at least thirteen single-gender schools for boys in Johannesburg as opposed to only three in Pretoria and even fewer in nearby towns such as Vereeniging, Heidelberg and Krugersdorp. The second cluster consisted of all the co-educational schools in Johannesburg.

During the second phase of sampling each single-gender boys' school in Johannesburg (cluster 1) was paired with a co-educational school (cluster 2) on the basis of similar geographical location, socio-economic status, language medium and similarity in composition (e.g. does the school use a ¹house system or not?). One pair of schools was chosen at random and included in the research.

A letter was written to the principals of two chosen schools, explaining the nature and purpose of the research and requesting their participation. Both principals granted permission for the research to be conducted at their schools.

¹ The school is divided into subunits called "houses" and each student is allocated to one house upon enrolment. Houses compete with one another in sports, cultural activities and academics, thus providing a focus on group loyalty.

Once the principals had given permission for the research to be conducted at the school, letters describing the research, and requesting written permission from parents were given to the schools to distribute to their learners.

It was decided to use adolescents in Grades 8 and 9 as respondents since Steinberg and Monahan's (2007:1541) investigation of the age-peer pressure relationship concluded that peer influence decreases between the ages of 14 and 18. Similarly, Bester and Fourie (2006:167) indicated that Grades 8 and 9 adolescents experience more peer pressure than adolescents in Grade 10 to 12 do.

Each school had nine classes per grade. The learners in Grades 8 and 9 were chosen by listing classes in each grade (for example 8A, 8B, 8C, etc.). During the final phase of sampling, systematic sampling was used, which is a form of random sampling in which a researcher selects every k^{th} (e.g., third or twelfth) case in the sampling frame (Bernard, 2013:132; Neuman, 2014:258). In this instance every 3rd class per grade were selected. Thus, three classes per grade were selected at the single-gender school. The same procedure was followed at the co-educational school.

Table 4.1 shows the type of school as well as the grade and gender of the respondents.

TABLE 4.1 LEARNERS PER TYPE OF SCHOOL AND GENDER, PER GRADE

Type of school	Gender	Grade 8	Grade 9	TOTAL
Single-gender	Boys	73	72	145
Co-educational	Boys	40	36	76
	Girls	34	31	65
TOTAL		147	139	286

The average age was 14.12 years with a standard deviation of 0.76.

4.3.2 Measuring instruments

In order to test the stated hypotheses, a questionnaire was developed to measure constructs such as motivation, stress, self-concept, relationship with peers, and other factors that relate to negative and positive peer pressure. The procedure that

was followed to develop this questionnaire will be discussed later in this chapter. The questionnaire consisted of three sections.

4.3.2.1 Section 1: Biographical details

The gender, age, and grade of the respondents were obtained with the purpose of describing the sample.

The name of the school was obtained to determine whether the respondent attended a single-gender or a co-educational school.

4.3.2.2 Section 2: The measurement of motivation, stress, self-concept, and peer relationships

Bester (2003:184) developed a questionnaire to measure affective factors which relate to performing arts such as motivation, stress, anxiety, relationship with peers, and self-concept. These variables are also variables that, according to the literature, are associated with peer pressure. Therefore, it was decided to use the questionnaire but to change the items and to make it more general instead of applicable to an art context. For example, “I feel like I am achieving something with my music” was an item that measured self-concept. It was changed to, “I feel like I am achieving something with my schoolwork”. The scale used by Bester (2003:184) remained the same.

This is exactly my experience.	6	5	4	3	2	1	This is not my experience.
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Each of the constructs included in this section of the questionnaire will be discussed individually.

4.3.2.2.1 Motivation

In this section the items measure adolescents’ attitude towards attending school, doing homework, to work and study to the best of their ability and to make an effort to produce work of a high standard.

Examples of items developed to measure motivation are the following:

Item 1 I am always motivated to go to class.

Item 13 When it comes to school work, I put duty before pleasure.

4.3.2.2.2 Stress

The items measure the adolescents' experience of stress due to academic expectations to perform well, to keep up with their school work and to participate in extra-curricular activities in spite of their academic work load.

Examples of items developed to measure stress are the following:

Item 9 I demand a lot from myself when it comes to school work.

Item 19 Other people expect too much from me.

4.3.2.2.3 Self-concept

In this section the items measure adolescents' perceptions of their competence and adequacy in academic and non-academic domains. The latter includes social, behavioural, and athletic spheres and reflects how adolescents evaluate themselves in the domains that they consider important.

Examples of items developed to measure self-concept are the following:

Item 2 I often feel unsure of myself in the classroom context.

Item 20 I have confidence in myself when I write tests or exams.

4.3.2.2.4 Relationship with peers

The items that measure relationship with peers try to establish to what extent the adolescents feel comfortable with their interaction with their friends, the size of the adolescents' friendship group and to what extent adolescents prefer their own company to that of others.

Examples of items developed to measure relationship with peers are the following:

Item 16 I find it difficult to be social with other learners.

Item 24 I am someone who reaches out to others.

Table 4.2 indicates the item numbers for each of the measured constructs. By adding up the responses for each item, a total score for each construct can be calculated. A high score for the construct indicates a strong presence of the specific construct, while a low score indicates a slight presence of the specific construct.

TABLE 4.2 ITEMS FOR EACH VARIABLE IN SECTION B

Variable	Amount	Item numbers
Motivation	20	1, 3*, 5*, 8, 13, 18*, 22*, 25, 30*, 31*, 34, 35, 37, 53, 54, 59, 67, 70, 77*, 80*
Stress	20	4, 7, 9, 12, 14, 17, 19, 40, 47, 52, 56, 57, 60, 62, 64, 69, 72, 74, 76, 79
Self-concept	20	2*, 6, 10*, 15, 20, 23, 26*, 28, 32*, 38*, 42*, 44*, 45, 48*, 50*, 58*, 61, 65, 68*, 75*
Relationship with peers	20	11, 16*, 21*, 24, 27, 29*, 33*, 36*, 39*, 41, 43*, 46*, 49*, 51*, 55, 63, 66, 71, 73*, 78*

* Not all items are set in the same direction and certain items' scales were reversed before the responses could be added to calculate a total. These items, of the scales that had to be reversed, are marked with a *.

4.3.2.3 Section 3: The measurement of positive and negative peer pressure

A variety of questionnaires, such as the measuring instrument developed by Fourie (2001), were considered to identify adolescents who experience peer pressure. This measuring instrument could not be used as it only measured negative peer pressure.

A measuring instrument that measures positive and negative peer pressure was found. The measuring instrument was the Peer Pressure Inventory (PPI) that was developed by Clasen and Brown (1985:460). It assesses the amount of pressure adolescents experience from peers in five domains: involvement with peers,

involvement in school, involvement with family, conformity to peers, and misconduct (drug use, sexual intercourse, delinquency). Based on the five domains, the PPI consists of five subsections with 53 pairs of statements. The items allow adolescents to rate the degree of positive and negative pressure in each subsection. Each item is scored from -3 to +3 with the “No Pressure” option scored as zero. The PPI scales displays adequate reliability. The Cronbach alpha coefficients for each subsection were 0.7 or higher: Peer involvement (0.78), School involvement (0.71), Family involvement (0.79), Peer conformity (0.70), Misconduct (0.87).

Some items in the existing questionnaire were not suitable because the measuring instrument was developed in the USA and are not necessarily applicable to the South African context (e.g. your friends encourage you to attend pep rallies). The questionnaire of Fourie (2001:152-154) was consulted to adapt some of the items of the PPI. The adapted questionnaire consisted of 50 items that had to be answered by the respondent by allocating a number between 1 and 6. Each item contains a pair of statements representing positive and negative pressure. An example of a typical item is:

My friends encourage me...	Circle number and write it in the block on the right.						My friends encourage me...
not to study for tests and exams	6	5	4	3	2	1	to study hard for test and exams

Each of the subsections included in the questionnaire will be discussed individually.

4.3.2.3.1 Academic performance

The “Academic performance” subsection relates the positive and negative pressure adolescents experience with regard to academic achievement. The items refer to studying for tests and examinations, doing homework, finishing school, school and class attendance, and subject choices.

Examples of items developed to measure peer pressure in an academic context are the following:

My friends encourage me...	Circle number and write it in the block on the right.						My friends encourage me...
not to study for tests and exams	6	5	4	3	2	1	to study hard for test and exams

to work hard and finish high school	6	5	4	3	2	1	to drop out of high school if I wish to do so
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4.3.2.3.2 Extra-curricular participation

The “Extra-curricular participation” subsection contained items, which relate to the positive and negative pressure adolescents experience regarding extra-curricular participation such as sports, cultural activities, and inter-house activities.

Examples of items developed to measure peer pressure relating to extra-curricular participation are the following:

My friends encourage me...	Circle number and write it in the block on the right.						My friends encourage me...
to take part in inter-house activities	6	5	4	3	2	1	not to take part in inter-house activities

to get along with my coach	6	5	4	3	2	1	not to get along with my coach
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4.3.2.3.3 General behaviour

The “General behaviour” subsection consisted of items which measure deviant behaviour (smoking, fighting, drinking alcohol, stealing) and on the positive side, pro-social behaviour (respecting others, adhere to school rules).

Examples of items developed to measure peer pressure relating to general behaviour are the following:

My friends encourage me...	Circle number and write it in the block on the right.						My friends encourage me...
not to smoke cigarettes	6	5	4	3	2	1	to smoke cigarettes

not to write on desks at school	6	5	4	3	2	1	to write on desks at school
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4.3.2.3.4 Peer conformity

The “Peer conformity” subsection reflects the positive and negative pressure adolescents experience regarding changes in belief, values, or behaviour in order to fit in with a group.

Examples of items developed to measure peer pressure relating to peer conformity are the following:

My friends encourage me...	Circle number and write it in the block on the right.						My friends encourage me...
to be committed to dating one person	6	5	4	3	2	1	to date as many people as I like

to have my own style of dress	6	5	4	3	2	1	to wear the same type of clothes as them
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4.3.2.3.5 Family involvement

The “Family involvement” subsection reflects the positive and negative pressure adolescents experience regarding involvement with their families. Items relate to family activities, following rules set by parents, discussing problems with parents, and involving parents in decision-making.

Examples of items developed to measure peer pressure relating to family involvement are the following:

My friends encourage me...	Circle number and write it in the block on the right.						My friends encourage me...
not to get involved in family activities	6	5	4	3	2	1	to get involved in family activities

to spend all my free time with them	6	5	4	3	2	1	to spend all my free time with them
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Table 4.3 contains the item numbers for each of the subsections. By adding up the responses for each item, a total score for each subsection was calculated. A high score for the subsection indicates a negative peer pressure of the specific subsection, while a low score indicates positive peer pressure of the specific subsection.

TABLE 4.3 ITEMS FOR EACH VARIABLE IN SECTION C

Variable	Amount	Item numbers
Academic performance	10	1, 7*, 19*, 24, 25, 31, 39, 40*, 47, 49
Extra-curricular participation	10	6*, 13*, 17, 26*, 27, 30*, 32, 41, 43, 44
Behaviour	10	3*, 5, 9, 14, 22*, 23, 29, 35*, 42, 45*
Family involvement	10	2, 10, 12, 20, 21, 34, 36, 38*, 46*, 50*
Peer conformity	10	4, 8*, 11*, 15*, 16*, 18, 28, 33*, 37, 48

- * Not all items are set in the same direction and certain items' scales were reversed before the responses were added to calculate a total. These items, of the scales that had to be reversed, are marked with a *.

4.3.3 Procedure followed during the empirical investigation

As discussed in paragraph 4.3.1 a letter was written to the principals of two chosen schools, explaining the nature and purpose of the research and requesting their participation. Both principals granted permission for the research to be conducted at their schools.

4.3.3.1 Pilot study

As discussed in paragraph 4.3.1 a letter was written to the principals of two chosen schools, explaining the nature and purpose of the research and requesting their participation. Both principals granted permission for the research to be conducted at their schools.

4.3.3.1 Pilot study

Initial permission was sought for conducting the pilot study in the two schools, which were part of the study. With permission granted, the researcher contacted the principals of each school for permission to recruit learners for the purpose of running a pilot study of the research instrument. The rationale for the pilot study was to identify ambiguity in the questionnaire, or in the procedures of administration, as well as in the instructions for the participants. Overall, the pilot study explored means to improve research items, format, and scales. With permission granted, 10 test-participants (from grade 8 and 8) were recruited from each school (single-gender and co-educational) and given letters describing the research and requesting written permission from parents.

The researcher supervised the pilot study and was available to explain and clarify items that respondents found difficult to understand. Twenty completed questionnaires were collected and thoroughly reviewed and analysed. The participants indicated that the items and instruction were easy to understand and that the process of administration was clear and effective.

4.3.3.2 Procedure followed during the actual empirical investigation

The questionnaires were completed after school hours. The questionnaires were completed at the single-gender boys' school first. The Grade 8 respondents were

taken to auditorium, where they completed the questionnaires. Thereafter, the Grade 9 respondents were taken to the same venue, where they completed the questionnaires. A similar procedure was followed at the co-educational school.

During the completion of the questionnaire, the instructions were read aloud to the respondents. The respondents were given the opportunity to ask questions about any uncertainty that may arise from the questionnaire. They completed the questionnaires at their own individual pace and unfamiliar words were explained as needed. After completing the questionnaires, the learners' Term 1 academic subject averages were transferred to the questionnaires in order to determine their academic performance. Thereafter, the questionnaires were numbered.

The questionnaires were carefully checked to determine if everything was in order and legible to ensure that the information could be properly captured. They were then for data capturing after which the data analysis was done.

The results obtained from the data analysis will be discussed in the next chapter. The full questionnaire appears as an example in Appendix 1.

CHAPTER FIVE

ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the empirical investigation was to determine how boys experience peer pressure at a single-gender school in comparison to the peer pressure experienced by boys at a co-educational school. Four hypotheses related to peer pressure have been formulated in this regard and a questionnaire measuring peer pressure, self-concept, relationship with peers, relationship with parents, motivation, and stress had to be developed to test these hypotheses.

The newly developed questionnaire was subjected to an item analysis, after which some of the items were removed. After the items were removed, new reliability coefficients were calculated for the different subsections of the questionnaire. Data obtained from the questionnaire was used to test the hypotheses which will be discussed in this chapter.

5.2 ITEM ANALYSIS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The newly developed questionnaire consists of three sections. In section A the gender, age, and grade of the respondents were obtained with the purpose of describing the sample. Section B measured motivation, stress, self-concept, relationship with peers, and Section C measured positive and negative peer pressure related to academic performance, extra-curricular participation, behaviour, family involvement, and peer conformity. An item analysis was done separately for each section while two aspects were considered during the item analysis, namely:

- The item-total correlation was calculated. The more suitable an item, the stronger it would correlate positively with the total of the section. If the item-total correlation was low or negative, item omission was considered.
- The reliability of each section was obtained by calculating an alpha coefficient. If the omission of an item significantly increased the alpha coefficient, the item was omitted. Otherwise, the item was retained. Items

that significantly correlated positively with the total and at the same time provided high reliability, were included in the final measuring instrument.

In Tables 5.1 to 5.9 the results of the item analysis are explained.

TABLE 5. 1 ITEM ANALYSIS FOR ITEMS MEASURING MOTIVATION

Number of respondents		286
Number of items		20
Alpha coefficient		0.86
Item	Item-total correlation	Alpha if item is omitted
1	0.588	0.850
3	0.347	0.858
5	0.480	0.853
8	0.079	0.868
13	0.552	0.850
18	0.508	0.852
22	0.597	0.848
25	0.535	0.851
30	0.437	0.854
31	0.267	0.861
34	0.332	0.859
35	0.621	0.848
37	0.498	0.852
53	0.641	0.847
54	0.516	0.852
59	0.409	0.856
67	0.564	0.849
70	0.587	0.849
77	0.582	0.848
80	-0.019	0.871

Of all the items that measure motivation, item 80 was the only one that correlated negatively with the total of the section. For this reason, item 80 was omitted, which resulted in the reliability coefficient increasing from 0.86 to 0.87.

TABLE 5.2 ITEM ANALYSIS FOR ITEMS MEASURING STRESS

Number of respondents		286
Number of items		20
Alpha coefficient		0.87
Item	Item-total correlation	Alpha if item is omitted
4	0.271	0.871
7	0.587	0.861
9	-0.019	0.879
12	0.504	0.863
14	0.629	0.859
17	0.297	0.871
19	0.419	0.867
40	0.648	0.858
47	0.526	0.863
52	0.540	0.862
56	0.497	0.864
57	0.433	0.866
60	0.469	0.865
62	-0.078	0.880
64	0.632	0.859
69	0.440	0.866
72	0.660	0.858
74	0.570	0.861
76	0.531	0.863
79	0.734	0.855

Items 9 and 62 correlated negatively with the total of the section. For this reason, items 9 and 62 were omitted, which resulted in the reliability coefficient increasing from 0.87 to 0.89.

TABLE 5.3 **ITEM ANALYSIS FOR ITEMS MEASURING SELF-CONCEPT**

Number of respondents		286
Number of items		20
Alpha coefficient		0.88
Item	Item-total correlation	Alpha if item is omitted
2	0.366	0.881
6	0.476	0.877
10	0.584	0.874
15	0.590	0.874
20	0.578	0.874
23	0.552	0.875
26	0.284	0.883
28	0.432	0.879
32	0.686	0.870
38	0.609	0.873
42	0.533	0.876
44	0.474	0.878
45	0.513	0.876
48	0.580	0.874
50	0.297	0.884
58	0.618	0.873
61	0.141	0.887
65	0.396	0.880
68	0.632	0.872
75	0.483	0.877

From Table 5.3 it can be deduced that all the items measuring self-concept correlate positively with the total of the section. Consequently, all items were retained.

TABLE 5.4 **ITEM ANALYSIS FOR ITEMS MEASURING RELATIONSHIP WITH PEERS**

Number of respondents		286
Number of items		20
Alpha coefficient		0.81
Item	Item-total correlation	Alpha if item is omitted
11	0.146	0.815
16	0.556	0.793
21	0.410	0.802
24	0.390	0.802
27	0.560	0.795
29	0.567	0.792
33	0.500	0.795
36	0.154	0.814
39	0.488	0.796
41	0.472	0.797
43	0.593	0.790
46	0.308	0.807
49	0.403	0.801
51	0.288	0.808
55	0.508	0.797
63	0.374	0.803
66	0.240	0.809
71	0.169	0.813
73	0.207	0.813
78	0.308	0.808

From Table 5.4 it can be deduced that all the items that measure relationship with peers correlate positively with the total of the section. Consequently, all items were retained.

TABLE 5.5 **ITEM ANALYSIS FOR ITEMS MEASURING PEER
PRESSURE RELATED TO ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE**

Number of respondents	286	
Number of items	10	
Alpha coefficient	0.81	
Item	Item-total correlation	Alpha if item is omitted
1	0.489	0.792
7	0.554	0.784
19	0.462	0.794
24	0.505	0.790
25	0.312	0.813
31	0.533	0.786
39	0.578	0.781
40	0.514	0.789
47	0.416	0.800
49	0.530	0.787

All the items measuring academic performance were retained since each item correlated positively with the total of the section.

TABLE 5.6 **ITEM ANALYSIS FOR ITEMS MEASURING PEER
PRESSURE RELATED TO EXTRA-CURRICULAR
PARTICIPATION**

Number of respondents	286	
Number of items	10	
Alpha coefficient	0.68	
Item	Item-total correlation	Alpha if item is omitted
6	0.461	0.633
13	0.464	0.638
17	0.405	0.645
26	0.439	0.641
27	0.197	0.686
30	0.396	0.649
32	0.526	0.625

41	0.196	0.690
43	0.432	0.644
44	0.093	0.712

All items that measure extra-curricular participation correlate positively with the total of the section. The item-total correlation of item 44 is very low. For this reason, item 44 was omitted. The reliability coefficient increased from 0.68 to 0.71.

TABLE 5.7 ITEM ANALYSIS FOR ITEMS MEASURING PEER PRESSURE RELATED TO BEHAVIOUR

Number of respondents		286
Number of items		10
Alpha coefficient		0.83
Item	Item-total correlation	Alpha if item is omitted
3	0.445	0.828
5	0.550	0.817
9	0.659	0.805
14	0.661	0.804
22	0.660	0.804
23	0.409	0.829
29	0.462	0.825
35	0.386	0.834
42	0.457	0.826
45	0.580	0.815

From Table 5.7 it can be deduced that all the items measuring behaviour correlate positively with the total of the section and that the omission of any of the items would lower rather than increase the reliability. Consequently, all items were retained.

**TABLE 5.8 ITEM ANALYSIS FOR ITEMS MEASURING PEER
PRESSURE RELATED TO FAMILY INVOLVEMENT**

Number of respondents	286	
Number of items	10	
Alpha coefficient	0.79	
Item	Item-total correlation	Alpha if item is omitted
2	0.539	0.764
10	0.319	0.788
12	0.489	0.770
20	0.476	0.770
21	0.388	0.780
34	0.483	0.769
36	0.550	0.760
38	0.471	0.773
46	0.514	0.766
50	0.400	0.789

All the items measuring family involvement were retained since each item correlated positively with the total of the section.

**TABLE 5.9 ITEM ANALYSIS FOR ITEMS MEASURING PEER
PRESSURE RELATED TO PEER CONFORMITY**

Number of respondents	286	
Number of items	10	
Alpha coefficient	0.75	
Item	Item-total correlation	Alpha if item is omitted
4	0.314	0.743
8	0.349	0.741
11	0.343	0.740
15	0.338	0.740
16	0.492	0.719
18	0.434	0.727
28	0.296	0.746

33	0.535	0.714
37	0.514	0.714
48	0.532	0.713

From Table 5.9 it can be deduced that all the items measuring peer conformity correlated positively with the total of the section. Consequently, all items were retained.

5.3 SUMMARY OF RELIABILITY OF THE SUBSECTIONS IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE

To determine the reliability of each subsection, the alpha reliability coefficient for each section was calculated separately as already explained. The subsection, number of items and the reliability of each subsection appear in Table 5.10 below.

TABLE 5.10 RELIABILITY COEFFICIENTS FOR EACH SECTION

Section	Number of items	Reliability coefficient
Motivation	20	0.87
Stress	20	0.89
Self-concept	20	0.88
Relationship with peers	20	0.81
Peer pressure related to academic performance	10	0.81
Peer pressure related to extra-curricular participation	10	0.71
Peer pressure related to behaviour	10	0.83
Peer pressure related to family involvement	10	0.79

Peer pressure related to peer conformity	10	0.75
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N = 286

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:245), the reliability of psychological tests should be 0.7 or higher. From the information in Table 5.10 it can be deduced that the different sections can be considered reliable.

5.4 NORMS FOR POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE PEER PRESSURE SCORES

Norms are calculated to serve as an objective reference that allows individual scores to be interpreted (Cohen & Swerdlik, 2002:100). Stanines were developed to serve this purpose in this study. Stanines refer to normalised standard scores divided into nine categories.

To calculate stanines, the cumulative percentage of the raw scores for positive and negative peer pressures were obtained from the questionnaire, after which the cut-off points of the nine categories were applied to the cumulative percentages. The stanines obtained in terms of positive and negative peer pressure are shown in Table 5.11.

As a rule, the first three stanines (1, 2 and 3) are considered to be low, the next three stanines (4, 5 and 6) average, while the last three stanines (7, 8 and 9) are considered high.

TABLE 5.11 STANINES FOR POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE PEER PRESSURE

Classification	Raw scores	
	Positive Peer Pressure	Negative Peer Pressure
LOW (Stanines 1, 2 and 3)	0 – 41	0 – 7
AVERAGE (Stanines 4, 5 and 6)	42 – 56	8 – 28
HIGH (Stanines 7, 8 and 9)	57 >	29 >

5.5 TESTING OF HYPOTHESES

5.5.1 Hypothesis 1

With regard to Hypothesis 1 (section 4.2.1) the following null hypothesis was tested:

There is no significant relationship between certain socio-affective variables and peer pressure (positive and negative peer pressure).

In order to test the null hypothesis, correlation coefficients between the respective socio-affective variables (motivation, stress, self-concept, and relationship with peers) and peer pressure were calculated. This was done for positive and negative peer pressures. The results appear in Table 5.12 below.

TABLE 5.12 CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN THE SOCIO-AFFECTIVE VARIABLES

Socio-affective variables	Positive peer pressure	Negative peer pressure
Motivation	0.29 *	-0.38 *
Stress	-0.08	0.05
Self-concept	0.13**	-0.17*
Relationship with peers	0.19**	-0.20*

N=286

* $p < 0.01$

** $p < 0.05$

For the rest $p > 0.05$

With regard to positive peer pressure, the socio-affective variables of self-concept and relationship with peers have a negative correlation on the 5% level of significance, while motivation has a negative correlation with positive peer pressure on the 1% level of significance. The null hypothesis can therefore be rejected in three of the four variables. The results imply that adolescents with high motivation, positive self-concept, and good relationships with peers, experience more positive peer pressure. The results furthermore imply that stress does not necessarily relate to positive peer pressure.

With regard to negative peer pressure, the socio-affective variables of self-concept, motivation and relationship with peers have a negative correlation on the 1% level of significance. The null hypothesis can therefore be rejected for three of the four

variables. These results imply that adolescents with low motivation, negative self-concept, and bad relationships with peers, experience more negative peer pressure. Once again, the results show that stress does not necessarily relate to negative peer pressure.

The above results are consistent with the suggestion made in Chapter 4 (section 4.2.1) and the research on peer pressure discussed in Chapter 3. Consequently, we can conclude that self-concept and relationship with peers relate to peer pressure. The above results, however, indicate that motivation is the most important factor that relates to peer pressure unlike the findings of Fourie (2001: 212) where self-concept was the most important factor in his research findings. However, this discrepancy could possibly be credited to the fact that both schools use a house system where mass participation in extra-curricular activities is encouraged. This type of mass participation produces a sense of competition among the adolescents, subsequently encouraging them to influence one another to participate and do their best, which can be interpreted as positive peer pressure. Both schools also stream the learners according to academic ability or subject choices. It would appear that adolescents place pressure on one another to perform better academically in order to be accepted by the peer group, which can also be interpreted as positive peer pressure.

5.5.2 Hypothesis 2

With regard to Hypothesis 2 (section 4.2.2) the following null hypothesis was tested:

There is no significant difference between the positive and negative peer pressure experienced by boys in a single-gender school.

To test the null hypothesis, the mean and standard deviation of each of the subsections for positive and negative peer pressure was calculated. In order to determine whether the averages differ significantly, a t-test for dependent variables was used in each instance. The results appear in Table 5.13 below.

TABLE 5.13 COMPARISON OF POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE PEER PRESSURE EXPERIENCED BY BOYS IN A SINGLE-GENDER SCHOOL

N=145 df=144	Average	Standard deviation	t-value	p
Positive peer pressure regarding academic performance	9.80	3.27	9.65	p<0.01
Negative peer pressure regarding academic performance	4.13	4.20		
Positive peer pressure regarding extra-curricular participation	10.16	2.64	14.46	p<0.01
Negative peer pressure regarding extra-curricular participation	3.65	3.26		
Positive peer pressure regarding behaviour	8.82	3.12	5.90	p<0.01
Negative peer pressure regarding behaviour	5.08	4.76		
Positive peer pressure regarding family involvement	9.76	2.81	11.65	p<0.01
Negative peer pressure regarding family involvement	3.77	3.76		
Positive peer pressure regarding peer relationships	9.66	2.82	10.01	p<0.01
Negative peer pressure regarding peer relationships	4.27	3.95		
Total positive peer pressure	48.19	10.86	12.83	p<0.01
Total negative peer pressure	20.90	15.88		

According to Table 5.13 above, positive and negative peer pressure differed significantly in each instance. Consequently, the null hypothesis can be rejected at the 1% level of significance. This implies that there is a significant difference in the positive and negative peer pressure experienced by boys in a single-gender school.

According to the average, boys in a single-gender school experience more positive than negative peer pressure. The most significant difference is between positive and negative peer pressure relating to extra-curricular participation (positive peer

pressure = 10.16; negative peer pressure = 3.65). The least significant difference is between positive and negative peer pressure relating to behaviour (positive peer pressure = 8.82; negative peer pressure = 5.08).

The above results are consistent with the suggestion made in Chapter 4 (section 4.2.2) and the research on peer pressure discussed in Chapter 3. There is a difference in the positive and negative peer pressure that boys experience in the absence of girls. Boys focus more on the peer group because acceptance is very important to adolescent boys, and therefore they tend to conform more to peer pressure to ensure that they are accepted within the group (Berndt, 1979; Brown, Clasen & Eicher, 1986:528). Brown (2013:80) suggests that gaining popularity or visibility within the peer group could be the motivating factor for adolescents to pursue certain extra-curricular activities. Bohnert *et al.* (2013, as cited in Brown, 2013:80) further reported that continuous involvement in extra-curricular activities, especially sport, increased the number of nominations an adolescent would receive as a close friend to other members of the peer group.

5.5.3 Hypothesis 3

With regard to Hypothesis 3 (section 4.2.3), the following null hypothesis was tested:

There is no significant difference in the positive and negative peer pressure experienced by boys in a single-gender school and boys in a co-educational school.

To test the null hypothesis, the mean and standard deviation of boys in single-gender and co-educational schools for positive peer pressure were calculated. Thereafter the same was done for negative peer pressure. In order to determine whether the averages differ significantly in each instance, a t-test for independent variables was used. The results appear in Table 5.14 and Table 5.15, respectively.

TABLE 5.14 COMPARISON OF THE POSITIVE PEER PRESSURE EXPERIENCED BY BOYS IN A SINGLE-GENDER SCHOOL AND BOYS IN A CO-EDUCATIONAL SCHCOOL

Pressure	School	N	Average	Standard deviation	t-value	p
Positive peer pressure regarding academic performance	Single-gender	145	9.80	3.27	0.32	p>0.05
	Co-educational	76	9.94	3.09		
Positive peer pressure regarding extra-curricular participation	Single-gender	145	10.16	2.64	1.16	p>0.05
	Co-educational	76	9.72	2.67		
Positive peer pressure regarding behaviour	Single-gender	145	8.82	3.12	0.99	p>0.05
	Co-educational	76	9.26	3.22		
Positive peer pressure regarding family involvement	Single-gender	145	9.76	2.81	1.28	p>0.05
	Co-educational	76	10.28	2.92		
Positive peer pressure regarding peer relationships	Single-gender	145	9.66	2.53	0.71	p>0.05
	Co-educational	76	9.93	2.71		
Total positive peer pressure	Single-gender	145	48.19	10.86	0.61	p>0.05
	Co-educational	76	49.14	11.31		

In all cases df=219

TABLE 5.15 **COMPARISON OF THE NEGATIVE PEER PRESSURE EXPERIENCED BY BOYS IN A SINGLE-GENDER SCHOOL AND BOYS IN A CO-EDUCATIONAL SCHOOL**

Pressure	School	N	Average	Standard deviation	t-value	p
Negative peer pressure regarding academic performance	Single-gender	145	4.13	4.21	0.93	p>0.05
	Co-educational	76	3.61	3.55		
Negative peer pressure regarding extra-curricular participation	Single-gender	145	3.65	3.26	0.28	p>0.05
	Co-educational	76	3.78	3.31		
Negative peer pressure regarding behaviour	Single-gender	145	5.08	4.76	1.25	p>0.05
	Co-educational	76	4.21	5.17		
Negative peer pressure regarding family involvement	Single-gender	145	3.77	3.76	1.32	p>0.05
	Co-educational	76	3.08	3.64		
Negative peer pressure regarding peer relationships	Single-gender	145	4.27	3.95	1.65	p>0.05
	Co-educational	76	3.36	3.86		
Total negative peer pressure	Single-gender	145	20.90	15.88	1.27	p>0.05
	Co-educational	76	18.03	16.11		

In all cases df=219

According to Table 5.14 and Table 5.15, no significant differences were obtained between the positive and negative peer pressure experienced by boys at a single-gender school and boys at a co-educational school. The null hypothesis can therefore not be rejected. The results indicate that there is no significant difference in the peer pressure (both negative and positive peer pressure) experienced by boys in a single-gender school and boys in a co-educational school.

The results above are not consistent with the assumptions made in Chapter 4 (section 4.2.3), namely that there would be a difference in how boys in a single-gender school experience negative and positive peer pressure compared to boys in a co-educational school. One of the major reasons for this assumption was related to the composition of single-gender boys' schools where Grade 8 and 9 learners are streamlined academically rather than placed at random as in co-educational schools. Because the boys in a single-gender school are placed in academically homogenous classes, they tend to compete to outperform one another, which may result in pressure. It was, therefore, assumed that there would be a difference in how the adolescents will experience peer pressure. Such a difference could not be indicated.

Another reason for not identifying any significant difference in the peer pressure experienced by boys in a single-gender school and boys in a co-educational school could possibly be credited to the fact that the single-gender and co-educational schools who participated in the study, were very similar in composition and both schools use a house system, which encourages mass participation in all aspects of the school.

5.5.4 Hypothesis 4

With regard to Hypothesis 4 (section 4.2.4), the following null hypothesis was tested:

There are no specific factors that discriminate best between those boys who experience positive peer pressure and those who experience negative peer pressure.

In order to test the null hypothesis, a stepwise discriminant analysis was performed to identify which factors discriminate best between those boys who experience positive peer pressure and those who experience negative peer pressure. Discriminant analysis finds a set of prediction equations based on independent variables that are used to classify individuals into groups. There are two possible objectives in a discriminant analysis: finding a predictive equation for classifying new individuals or interpreting the predictive equation to better understand the relationships that may exist among the variables (McLachlan, 2004:1).

The two groups were compiled using the stanines in Table 5.11:

- Positive peer pressure: Adolescents who obtained high scores in Section B of the questionnaire (stanines 7 to 9). There were 54 boys in this group.
- Negative peer pressure: Adolescents who obtained low scores in Section B of the questionnaire (stanines 1 to 3). There were 51 boys in this group.

Items relating to type of school, choice to participate in sport, extra-curricular participation, motivation, self-concept, stress and relationship with peers were used as independent variables in the discriminant analysis. Boys who experience positive peer pressure and boys who experience negative peer pressure were used as the dependant variable in the discriminant analysis. The results appear in Table 5.16 below.

TABLE 5.16 DISCRIMINANT ANALYSIS USING ITEMS RELATING TO PEER PRESSURE AS INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

Step	Variable	R ²	F	df	p
1	Motivation	0.11	13.23	(1.103)	p<0.01
2	Relationship with peers	0.13	2.99	(2.102)	p<0.01

In the discriminant analysis the independent variable which differs most between those boys who experience positive peer pressure and those who experience negative peer pressure, enters the model first. In this instance, it was motivation, which explained 11% ($R^2 = 0.1138$) of the variance between the two groups of boys. The proportion of the explained variance was significant: $F(1.103)=13.23$; $p<0.01$. The next variable to enter the model was relationship with peers, explaining an additional 2% of the variance between the two groups of boys. This additional proportion was significant: $F(2.102)=2.99$; $p<0.01$. None of the remaining variables could explain a significant larger proportion of the variance. In total motivation and relationship with peers explained 13% of the distinctive characteristics of the boys who experience positive peer pressure and the boys who experience negative peer pressure.

5.6 SUMMARY OF RESULTS

A questionnaire was used to measure constructs such as motivation, stress, self-concept, relationship with peers, and factors that relate to negative and positive peer

pressure. The questionnaire consisted of three sections. Section 1 was biographical details in order to describe the sample. Section 2 measured the socio-affective variables that relate to peer pressure and consisted of 80 items. Section 3 measured positive and negative peer pressure and consisted of 50 items. In total there were 130 items.

- An item analysis was done for each section of the questionnaire. All items that correlated negatively with the total have been omitted.
- The reliability coefficients for the peer pressure subsections and socio-affective variables were all above 0.70.
- Norms for the questionnaire were obtained by calculating stanine scores.
- The following conclusions can be made after the hypotheses have been tested:
 - There is a significant relationship between peer pressure (positive and negative peer pressure) and motivation, self-concept and relationship with peers. Adolescents with high motivation, positive self-concept and good relationships with peers, experience more positive peer pressure, whereas adolescents with low motivation, negative self-concept and bad relationships with peers, experience more negative peer pressure. The results indicate that motivation is the most important factor that relates to peer pressure. There is however, no significant relationship between stress and peer pressure (positive and negative peer pressure).
 - There is a significant difference in the positive and negative peer pressure experienced by boys in a single-gender school. Boys at a single-gender school experience more positive than negative peer pressure with regard to academic performance, extra-curricular participation, general behaviour, family involvement and relationship with peers.
 - There is no significant difference between the peer pressure (both negative and positive peer pressure) experienced by boys in a single-gender school and boys in a co-educational school.

- Motivation explains 11% of the variance between those boys who experience positive peer pressure and those boys who experience negative peer pressure. Relationship with peers, explain an additional 2% of the variance. Motivation and relationship with peers can, therefore, be considered as the most important variables which differentiate between those boys who experience positive and negative peer pressure.

CHAPTER 6

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of the study was to determine the nature of the peer pressure that boys experience at a single-gender school in comparison to the peer pressure experienced by boys at a co-educational school, to identify the variables that relate to negative and positive peer pressure, and to determine whether boys experience more negative or positive peer pressure in a single-gender school.

A twofold literature study was conducted. The first part of the literature study was conducted in order to conceptualise single-gender education, to differentiate between single-gender and co-educational schooling, and to explore advantages and disadvantages of single-gender education. The second part of the literature study was conducted in order to analyse the phenomenon of peer pressure, how adolescents experience pressure, and to conceptualise factors which influence negative and positive peer pressure.

An empirical investigation was carried out involving 286 high school adolescents. An instrument was developed to measure positive and negative peer pressure and the socio-affective variables (motivation, stress, self-concept and relationship with peers) that relate to peer pressure. The results indicated a significant relationship between peer pressure (positive and negative peer pressure) and the socio-affective variables, except for stress. There was also a significant difference in the positive and negative peer pressure that boys experience at a single-gender school. Boys at a single-gender school experience more positive than negative peer pressure. There was no significant difference between the peer pressure experienced by boys in a single-gender school and boys in a co-educational school. A discriminant analysis found that motivation and relationship with peers discriminate best between those boys who experience positive peer pressure and those who experience negative peer pressure. As these factors were identified as the most important ones relating to peer pressure, the recommendations will mainly focus on these factors as well as how to reduce negative peer pressure.

6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS RELATED TO THE FACTORS THAT DISCRIMINATE BEST BETWEEN THOSE BOYS WHO EXPERIENCE POSITIVE PEER PRESSURE AND THOSE BOYS WHO EXPERIENCE NEGATIVE PEER PRESSURE

As already mentioned, a discriminant analysis found that motivation and relationship with peers discriminate best between those boys who experience positive peer pressure and those who experience negative peer pressure. Motivation explained 11% of the difference between those boys who experience positive peer pressure and those boys who experience negative peer pressure, and relationship with peers explained an additional 2% of the difference. In total, motivation and relationship with peers explain 13% of the difference between those boys who experience positive peer pressure and those who experience negative peer pressure.

6.2.1 Motivation

The current investigation found that adolescents with high motivation experience more positive peer pressure, whereas adolescents with low motivation experience more negative peer pressure.

Motivation is defined as the process that initiates, guides, and maintains goal-orientated behaviours (Nevid, 2013:268). There are two different forms of motivation that are frequently described in the literature, namely extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation is typically driven by an external reward which usually includes materialistic incentive, praise, or consequence, while intrinsic motivation is driven by an internal interest (Pintrich & Harris, 2003:667).

Parents and teachers can make a contribution to ensure that adolescents are motivated which will increase their experience of positive peer pressure by keeping the following guidelines in mind:

- Although internal motivation is the most appropriate form of motivation, external motivation cannot be ignored. Many learners are motivated when they receive approval (from parents, teachers and even peers) or reward in one form or another. A reward for learners who can make their own decisions and take a stand must be in place (Bester 2003:258).

- Teachers should keep in mind that what motivates one learner does not necessarily motivate another. It is important that teachers know their learners well. If teachers know their learners' personalities, they will be more successful in motivating learners to get involved in extra-curricular activities, to perform better academically, to deal with disappointment, and to handle peer pressure (Bester 2003:259).
- Teachers should adopt a supportive teaching style and avoid controlling behaviours. Supportive teacher behaviours include listening, providing encouragement, being responsive to learners' questions, and showing empathy for learners (Reeve & Jang, 2006:209).
- Shraw et. al (2006:114) proposed that teachers should use enquiry teaching, which creates an environment in which adolescents are able to pose critical questions about society and events in their lives. This may help them to make decisions regarding peer pressure and, subsequently, withstand negative pressures.
- Urdan and Schoenfelder (2006:346) found that if adolescents are provided with opportunities to interact and work together so that they get to know each other well and build positive social bonds during lessons, they are more likely to become cohesive and experience increased motivation. The increased motivation and positive peer relationships will result in adolescents experiencing less negative peer pressure.
- Renninger and Hidi (2011:183-184) stated that focusing on activities and tasks that feature novelty, challenge, and the supportive role of those people who show an interest in the adolescent (such as parents, teachers or peers) may promote adolescents' intrinsic motivation to perform better in the activities or tasks. An adolescent who is more intentionally involved in constructive activities will most probably experience less negative peer pressure.
- It is important to provide feedback to learners in order for them to correct their mistakes, evaluate their progress, and to determine whether their set goals

have been achieved (Moeller *et al.*, 2012:205-213). Adolescents who feel that they make progress in dealing with negative peer pressure will be in a better position to deal with it in future.

- Paulu (2005:59-63) suggested the following guidelines for parents to motivate adolescents:
 - Be a good role model by demonstrating the value of learning and hard work, making an effort, completing work, and meeting obligations.
 - Emphasise that sustained effort over time is the key to achievement. Teach adolescents to set high goals and to work hard to achieve them. Goal-driven adolescents will experience less negative peer pressure.
 - Identify the adolescents' strengths and build on these in order to motivate them.
 - Have realistic expectations. It is important to set high standards for adolescents but when adolescents are asked to do the impossible, they may stop trying, which could put them in danger of complying with negative peer pressure in order to be accepted.
 - Be patient. Adolescents need time to develop the maturity that allows them to have successful peer interactions and make decisions regarding negative peer pressure with minimum supervision.

6.2.2 Relationship with peers

The onset of adolescence marks a change in patterns of social behaviour. One of the most obvious changes in adolescence is that the social core around which the adolescent's world revolves, shifts from the family to the peer group. Adolescents become more dependent on their peer relationships and distance themselves from their relationships with their parents (Conger & Galambos, 1997:177). Fourie (2001:208) found that adolescents who have inadequate relationships with their peers tend to experience more peer pressure than adolescents who have positive peer relationships. Parents and teachers can make a contribution to ensure positive relationships between adolescents and their peers by keeping the following guidelines in mind:

- Guralnick (1994:46) states that when teachers use learners' names or elicit discussions about individual experiences, interests, and backgrounds, it provides learners with the opportunity to get to know one another, and to identify common interests and shared experiences that promote peer acceptance and positive friendships.
- Kemple and Hartle (1997:142) suggest that schools encourage positive peer interactions by fostering a safe and respectful emotional environment by implementing a democratic style of discipline, lead discussions about individual interests and experience so that students can develop a better understanding of each other and identify their shared interests.
- Brown (1997:1-3) suggests the following strategies for parents to promote healthy peer relationships during adolescence:
 - Get to know their adolescents' friends.
 - Nurture adolescents' interests. Involvement in healthy, self-enhancing activities breeds healthy, self-enhancing friendship.
 - Create opportunities to practice decision-making and problem-solving skills.
 - Set reasonable limits on peer interactions.
 - Be more supportive than directive.
 - Discipline with choices and consequences, rather than demands and punishments.
- Gettinger (2003:299) suggests that promoting social competence will provide adolescents with the opportunity to strengthen peer relationships. Social competence refers to a person's general capacity to develop and function successfully in personal, social and community situations. Socially competent adolescents have the ability to integrate thinking, emotion and behaviour in different social contexts to foster social acceptance from their peers. Gettinger (2003:304) further states that teachers can promote social competence by encouraging learners to respect individual differences, value the participation of all learners, and share common social and academic goals.

- Ming-Tak (2008:132) suggests that teachers should take a proactive approach in promoting positive peer relationships among students in the classroom by developing strategies in the following three areas, namely teaching social-emotional skills; conflict resolution skills; and problem-solving skills.

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING MINIMISING NEGATIVE PEER PRESSURE

Peer pressure involves changing one's behaviour to meet the perceived expectations of others and can further be defined as social pressure that forces a person to choose certain actions, adopt certain values, or otherwise conform in order to be accepted (Castrogiovanni, 2002:4). Parents and teachers can make a contribution to ensure that adolescents experience less negative peer pressure by keeping the following guidelines that Brown (1990) and De Guzman (2007) suggest, in mind:

- Nurture adolescents' self-concept and abilities in order for them to be equipped to foster positive peer relationships and deflect negative peer pressure.
- Encourage positive relationships between adolescents and significant adults. Adolescents should know that there are adults who care about them and who will help and guide them with their peer relationships.
- Encourage diverse relationships. Respect and appreciation for ethnic, gender, socio-economic status, religious, and other differences should be modelled.
- Support parent education programmes. Parents need to be better informed about the dynamics of adolescent peer groups and the demands and expectations adolescents face regarding peer relationships.
- Equip adolescents with the necessary skills to resist negative behaviours and make better decisions. Adolescents will find themselves in situations where they have to make a decision in terms of whether or not to engage in certain

behaviours or give in to peer pressure. It is, therefore, essential that adolescents have the necessary skills to analyse the situation and make the appropriate decision.

- Teach adolescents the necessary strategies to deal with negative peer pressure. Discuss hypothetical situations or do role-play to devise possible strategies to deal with these situations.

6.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE INVESTIGATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Due to practical reasons, the investigation had certain limitations with regard to the sample and the variables that were taken into account. These limitations, however, may provide opportunities for future research, which will be discussed below.

- Adolescents used in the current investigation are representative of neighbourhoods with an average to high socio-economic status. It is suggested that future investigations include adolescents that are representative of low socio-economic status areas to determine whether positive and negative peer pressure is experienced differently by adolescents with different socio-economic backgrounds.
- A comparison was made between the peer pressure that boys in single-gender schools experience and peer pressure experienced by boys in co-educational schools. Future investigations could compare the peer pressure that girls in single-gender schools experience compared to girls in co-educational schools.
- The current investigation compared the peer pressure that boys in single-gender schools experience with the peer pressure experienced by boys in co-educational schools. If a similar investigation is undertaken, it could compare the peer pressure that girls in single-gender schools experience compared to boys in single-gender schools.
- Both schools who participated in the current investigation worked on a house system, where the school is divided into subunits called “houses”. If a similar

investigation is undertaken, it could compare the peer pressure that boys in single-gender schools experience compared to boys in co-educational schools where neither or only one of the schools, work on a house system.

- The sample was drawn from only Grade 8 and 9 learners as the literature showed that negative peer pressure was most prevalent during this age and that peer pressure decreased as adolescents got older. In a future research project, one can consider determining whether age applies to positive peer pressure. In other words, determine whether positive peer pressure would increase or decrease as adolescents got older.
- Motivation discriminated best between those boys who experience positive peer pressure and those who experience negative peer pressure. Therefore, it is recommended that a more thorough investigation of motivation could be done with regard to peer pressure.
- Relationships with peers also discriminated between the two groups of boys; therefore, it is recommended that a more thorough investigation of peer relationships could be done with regard to peer pressure.
- This study only incorporated motivation, stress, self-concept, and relationship with peers as socio-affective variables that relate to peer pressure. Other socio-affective variables such as self-efficacy, attitude, interest, educational and home background, and socio-economic status could be considered.

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APPENDIX 1

PERSONAL QUESTIONNAIRE FOR HIGH SCHOOL LEARNERS

Please read the following instructions:

1. The questionnaire that you are going to work through is not a test. It is merely for information purposes. There are no right or wrong answers.
2. The purpose of this questionnaire is to reveal how high school learners think and what they think about certain situations. Try to reflect your own thoughts and feelings accurately. Answer the questions honestly and not how others would expect you to answer.
3. Your responses will be processed by computer. It is therefore confidential.

SECTION A

Please complete the following information by writing the number you choose in the block. (one number per block)

SCHOOL:

k1

1. Gender Male = 1 Female = 2

k2

2. Age Write your age in years in space provided
(one number per block)

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
----------------------	----------------------

k3

k4

3. Grade Grade 8 Grade 9

k5

4. Do you participate in sport? Yes = 1 No = 2

k6

5. Extra-murals participation. Own choice = 1 Compulsory = 2

k7

SECTION B

INSTRUCTIONS

Answer the following questions by rating yourself on a scale between 1 and 6.
Write down the number in the block.

This is exactly
my experience.

6

5

4

3

2

1

This is not my
experience.

1. I am always motivated to go to class.

k8

2. I often feel unsure of myself in a classroom context.

k9

3. I give up easily when a section of work is too difficult.

k10

4. I am not in control of my school work.

k11

5. I hate studying.

k12

6. I feel like I am achieving something with my school work.

k13

This is exactly my experience.	6	5	4	3	2	1	This is not my experience.
---	----------	----------	----------	----------	----------	----------	---------------------------------------

- | | |
|---|----------------------|
| 7. I get frustrated with my school work because I have too much work and too little time. | <input type="text"/> |
| | k14 |
| 8. It bothers me when I fail to do my duties at school. | <input type="text"/> |
| | k15 |
| 9. I demand a lot from myself when it comes to my school work. | <input type="text"/> |
| | k16 |
| 10. I am mostly disappointed in myself as a school learner. | <input type="text"/> |
| | k17 |
| 11. I like helping other learners who need help. | <input type="text"/> |
| | k18 |
| 12. Because of school commitments, I feel like I am not spending enough time on myself. | <input type="text"/> |
| | k19 |
| 13. When it comes to school work, I put duty before pleasure. | <input type="text"/> |
| | k20 |
| 14. I often feel stressed because of the amount of school work I have to do. | <input type="text"/> |
| | k21 |
| 15. I feel proud of what I have achieved. | <input type="text"/> |
| | k22 |

**This is exactly
my experience.**

6

5

4

3

2

1

**This is not my
experience.**

16. I find it difficult to be social with other learners.

k23

17. Constant competition with my peers gets me down.

k24

18. I always look for reasons not to do my homework.

k25

19. Other people expect too much from me.

k26

20. I have confidence in myself when I write tests or exams.

k27

21. I do not need friends at school.

k28

22. I only do my homework when I am in the mood for it.

k29

23. I have my school work under control – I know where I am going in life.

k30

24. I am someone who reaches out to others.

k31

This is exactly my experience.	6	5	4	3	2	1	This is not my experience.
---	----------	----------	----------	----------	----------	----------	---------------------------------------

25. When it comes to school work, I set goals for myself and I try to achieve them.

k32

26. I am hesitant to learn new, challenging work.

k33

27. I am a jovial person who gets along well with others.

k34

28. I have hope for myself as a high school learner.

k35

29. I find it difficult to make friends.

k36

30. If school work is too difficult, I do not even attempt to do it.

k37

31. I am usually enthusiastic when I start new work, but later on the enthusiasm becomes less.

k38

32. I often feel that I will never deliver good marks.

k39

33. I often feel lonely.

k40

This is exactly my experience.	6	5	4	3	2	1	This is not my experience.
-----------------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	-------------------------------

34. It bothers me when I have not completed my school work for the day.

k41

35. When it comes to school work, I spend my time productively.

k42

36. I am very critical of my peers.

k43

37. I enjoy learning new work and expanding my knowledge.

k44

38. I sometimes feel that I will never achieve much in school.

k45

39. I definitely have less friends than most of my peers.

k46

40. It feels like I am drowning in my school work.

k47

41. I do not easily trust my peers.

k48

42. I fail at most of the school work I attempt to learn.

k49

This is exactly my experience.	6	5	4	3	2	1	This is not my experience.
---	----------	----------	----------	----------	----------	----------	---------------------------------------

43. I do not really have friends that I can confide in.

k50

44. When it comes to school work, I am embarrassed about my shortcomings.

k51

45. My academic achievement is acceptable to me.

k52

46. My social relationships are superficial.

k53

47. Preparing for tests and exams puts a lot of pressure on me.

k54

48. I often doubt my abilities.

k55

49. Friends make me feel inferior.

k56

50. I do not have enough confidence to speak in front of others.

k57

51. I am often angry at my friends because I am sensitive to what they say about me.

k58

**This is exactly
my experience.**

6

5

4

3

2

1

**This is not my
experience.**

52. Because of my school work, I forgot how to relax.

k59

53. I see myself as a hard worker at school.

k60

54. I am determined to hand in assignments that are of a high standard.

k61

55. I feel comfortable when I am with my friends.

k62

56. Because of my workload at school, I often get impatient with others.

k63

57. I am under so much pressure with extra-mural activities that I tend to neglect my school work.

k64

58. I am embarrassed about the standard of the school work I deliver.

k65

59. I do not have to be told to do my homework.

k66

60. It feels as if my school commitments are never-ending.

k67

**This is exactly
my experience.**

6

5

4

3

2

1

**This is not my
experience.**

61. Doing well academically gives meaning to my life.

k68

62. I constantly push myself to achieve excellent results.

k69

63. I do my part to keep my friendships alive.

k70

64. School work makes my life too rushed.

k71

65. I can overcome any obstacles because I believe in myself.

k72

66. I accept my friends as they are.

k73

67. I catch up on any school work that I have missed.

k74

68. I struggle a lot in school.

k75

69. Because of my school work, I feel guilty when I relax.

k76

**This is exactly
my experience.**

6

5

4

3

2

1

**This is not my
experience.**

70. I am motivated to learn new, challenging work.

k77

71. I can give to others, without expecting anything in return.

k78

72. I feel that my workload at school is too much.

k79

73. Before I realise it, I say hurtful things to my friends.

k80

74. I experience stress to master school work that is above my ability.

k81

75. I would change a lot of things about myself as a high school learner
if I could.

k82

76. I experience conflict between the demands of my school work and
my
personal interests.

k83

77. I often postpone school work.

k84

78. I enjoy doing things on my own, rather than in a group.

k85

**This is exactly
my experience.**

6

5

4

3

2

1

**This is not my
experience.**

79. My school work causes stress because I do not have enough time.

k86

80. When it comes to school work, I do what is expected of me, and nothing more.

k87

SECTION C

INSTRUCTIONS

Here are **PAIRS** of **STATEMENTS** describing situations where your friends encourage you to do something or not to do something.

For each pair, **READ** both statements left and right, and decide whether friends mostly encourage you to do the one on the **LEFT** or the one on the **RIGHT**.

Award a score for yourself regarding each **PAIR** of statements. Write the number in the block next to each **PAIR** of statements.

My friends encourage me...	Circle number and write it in the block on the right.						My friends encourage me...	
1. not to study for tests and exams	6	5	4	3	2	1	to study hard for test and exams	<div>k88</div>
2. to go against my parents' opinions and rules	6	5	4	3	2	1	to respect my parents' opinions and rules	<div>k89</div>
3. not to smoke cigarettes	6	5	4	3	2	1	to smoke cigarettes	<div>k90</div>
4. to socialise with other people	6	5	4	3	2	1	to only socialise with them	<div>k91</div>
5. to start a fight if I am provoked	6	5	4	3	2	1	to avoid fights even if I am provoked	<div>k92</div>
6. to take part in inter-house activities	6	5	4	3	2	1	not to take part in inter-house activities	<div>k93</div>
7. to regularly do homework	6	5	4	3	2	1	to not worry about homework	<div>k94</div>
8. to be committed to dating one person	6	5	4	3	2	1	to date as many people as I like	<div>k95</div>

My friends encourage me...	Circle number and write it in the block on the right.						My friends encourage me...
9. to drink alcohol	6	5	4	3	2	1	not to drink alcohol
10. not to get involved with family activities	6	5	4	3	2	1	to get involved in family activities
11. to choose social events I would like to go to	6	5	4	3	2	1	to choose social events that they want to go to
12. to stay out past my curfew time	6	5	4	3	2	1	to get home by the time my parents said I should
13. to participate in extra-mural activities	6	5	4	3	2	1	not to participate in extra-mural activities
14. to smoke e-cigarettes (vape)	6	5	4	3	2	1	not to smoke e-cigarettes (vape)
15. to be friends with other people	6	5	4	3	2	1	to only be friends with them
16. to have my own style of dress	6	5	4	3	2	1	to wear the same type of clothes as them
17. not to be overinvolved in a sports team	6	5	4	3	2	1	to be involved in a sports team
18. to try look or act older than what I am	6	5	4	3	2	1	to try look and act my own age
19. to work hard and finish high school	6	5	4	3	2	1	to drop out of high school if I wish to do so
20. to hide problems from my parents	6	5	4	3	2	1	to discuss my problems with my parents
21. to spend all my free time with them	6	5	4	3	2	1	to spend my free time with my family
22. not to use alcohol at parties	6	5	4	3	2	1	to use alcohol at parties

k96

k97

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k104

k105

k106

k107

k108

k109

My friends encourage me...	Circle number and write it in the block on the right.						My friends encourage me...	
23. to steal when the opportunity arises	6	5	4	3	2	1	not to steal anything at any time	
								k110
24. not to worry about academic performance	6	5	4	3	2	1	to be concerned about academic performance	
								k111
25. not to worry about being liked by the teachers	6	5	4	3	2	1	to be concerned about being liked by the teachers	
								k112
26. to get along with my coach	6	5	4	3	2	1	not to get along with my coach	
								k113
27. not to be involved in cultural activities	6	5	4	3	2	1	to be involved in cultural activities	
								k114
28. to only date people they approve of	6	5	4	3	2	1	to choose who I would like to date	
								k115
29. to disrespect adults when I am treated unfairly	6	5	4	3	2	1	to respect adults at all times	
								k116
30. to attend sport practices	6	5	4	3	2	1	not to worry about not regularly attending practices	
								k117
31. to bunk classes or school	6	5	4	3	2	1	to attend classes and school	
								k118
32. to feel that extra-murals are a waste of time	6	5	4	3	2	1	to feel that extra-murals are good for me	
								k119
33. to have my own opinion about things	6	5	4	3	2	1	to have the same opinion as they do	
								k120
34. not to involve my parents in making decisions	6	5	4	3	2	1	to discuss important decisions with my parents	
								k121
35. not to write on desks at school	6	5	4	3	2	1	to write on desks at school	
								k122
36. not to tell my parents where I go	6	5	4	3	2	1	to tell my parents where I go	
								k123

My friends encourage me...	Circle number and write it in the block on the right.						My friends encourage me...
37. to listen to music that they like	6	5	4	3	2	1	to listen to music I like
38. to get along with my parents	6	5	4	3	2	1	to give my parents a hard time
39. to give teachers a hard time	6	5	4	3	2	1	to be nice to teachers
40. to put a lot of effort into assignments	6	5	4	3	2	1	not to put much effort into assignments
41. to play sports to keep the teachers happy	6	5	4	3	2	1	to strive to be the best in the sport I do
42. to bully others when they do it	6	5	4	3	2	1	not to take part in any bullying
43. not to take part in all aspects of school	6	5	4	3	2	1	to work towards achieving in school
44. not to be bothered in public speaking	6	5	4	3	2	1	to be involved in public speaking
45. to adhere to the school rules	6	5	4	3	2	1	not to be bothered about the school rules
46. to appreciate my parents' involvement in school	6	5	4	3	2	1	to despise my parents' involvement in school
47. to choose the same subjects as them	6	5	4	3	2	1	to choose subjects of my own choice
48. to talk and act the same way they do	6	5	4	3	2	1	to be my own person
49. not to worry about my marks	6	5	4	3	2	1	to try work towards obtaining good marks
50. to trust my parents	6	5	4	3	2	1	not to trust my parents

k124

k125

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k136

k137

For office use

k138

k139

k140

k141

k142

